Hafa Adai!

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Ogumoro conviction affirmed in part, reversed in part. PAGE 5

75¢

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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COVID-19 tests draw few takers

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

As of yesterday, May 4, and based on the assumption that the CNMI population stands at 50,000, only 2.7% of Saipan's population has taken advantage of the free mass testing for COVID-19 at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport.

This means that, out of 50,000 individuals on Saipan, only 1,335 individuals have gotten tested and, with the resumption of flights from Guam over the weekend, this begs the question: "Should the governor make it mandatory for every passenger that comes into Saipan take the test?"

"I think that it should be mandatory since there are a lot of reports that people who have recovered from the virus

See COVID-19 on Page 4

AT A GLANCE

As of 6pm, May 4, 2020**

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	148	1	149
Recovered	125	0	125
Active	12	7	19
Deaths	6*	0	6*

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	14	0	14
Recovered	12	0	12
Active	0	0	0
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			1,335

*Total includes a sailor from the USS *Theodore Roosevelt*.

**Saipan has gone 17 days with no new reported cases, with 1,335 persons tested through the community-based testing at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. Guam has one new confirmed case and six previously released from isolation who have returned to active isolation status.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Health Care Corp.

To-do plan for $36M CARES Act funds now out

With $36 million now on hand for the CNMI government's use for its coronavirus response, the CNMI Department of Finance has issued a plan on how it intends to use that money.

In a statement from the Office of the Governor last Sunday, it showed that the biggest chunk of money, amounting to $11 million, will be used to buy COVID-19 test kits, Personal Protective Equipment like face masks and face shields, first aid kits, disinfectant sprays, and sanitation equipment.

The statement stressed that the money, provided to the CNMI government under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act,

See TO-DO on Page 4

IHG inks deal to manage Fiesta Resort

File photo provided by IHG shows the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan. It will be renamed the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan in 2022.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

An international hotel chain will run and manage Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan starting next month and rename the hotel the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan in 2022.

» Hotel to be renamed Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan in 2022

According to a news advisory yesterday, it said that InterContinental Hotels Group has signed a long-term agreement with Asia Pacific Hotels Inc., which owns the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan, to take on management of the hotel starting in May 2020.

The 416-room hotel will then be rebranded as Crowne

See IHG on Page 4

Isolated by oceans: Islands tamp down virus

By CALEB JONES
ASSOCIATED PRESS

HONOLULU (AP)—Flying to a faraway beach might seem like the perfect way to escape a pandemic, but for isolated Pacific islands, controlling the coronavirus means cutting off tourism.

Hawaii has among the lowest COVID-19 infection and mortality rates in the U.S. As cases rose in March, Gov. David Ige did something no other state can—effectively seal its borders. People who do come face a two-week quarantine, stopping the flow of tens of thousands of tourists who typically arrive every day.

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To help limit the spread of coronavirus, please adhere to social distancing recommendations and stay at least 6 feet away from others.
LAS VEGAS

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A data firm predicts global travel demand won't resume its normal pace until 2023.

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In televised town hall, President Donald Trump pushes for economic reopening.

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ASIA
North Korea's Kim Jong Un did not undergo surgery or any other medical procedure.

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GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

Manglona resets Ataligs' jury trial to July 7

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona has reset the jury trial of Rota Mayor Efraim M. Atalig and his girlfriend, Evelyn Atalig, to July 7, 2020.

The trial has already been reset several times for many reasons; this most recent one is due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Manglona also set a motion hearing for June 2 at 10am.

David G. Banes, the court-appointed counsel for Efraim Atalig, has informed the court that the Ataligs intend to file a motion to dismiss the indictment and a motion to allow their expert witness to review the grand jury and Henthorn materials in this case.

Henthorn gives defense attorneys the right to any information in an agent's personnel record relating to dishonesty, perjury, and others that can be used to impeach the agent's testimony.

Manglona also set an evidentiary hearing for May 13 to address the defendants' joint motion for sanction.

Meanwhile, Efraim Atalig, through Banes, submitted last week a summary of the opinion of his expert witness, former Federal Bureau of Investigation agent and federal criminal investigator Dr. Gregory Vecchi. Banes described Vecchi as an assistant professor of criminal justice and a police academy instructor specializing in interview and interrogation techniques.

Banes said Vecchi is expected to testify that the investigation of this case exhibits confirmation bias against the Ataligs on the part of the U.S. government investigators, primarily FBI special agent Haejun Park. The lawyer said Vecchi is expected to testify that the government investigators, primarily Park, improperly influenced and threatened witnesses, and also failed to conform to accepted investigative standards and practices.

The charges against Efraim and Evelyn Atalig involve at least eight trips taken by the couple at different times in 2018 to Guam, Palau, the U.S. mainland, South Korea, and Saipan.

The Ataligs are being charged jointly with conspiracy to commit wire fraud and theft from program receiving federal funds, wire fraud, and theft from program receiving federal funds. Both are also charged separately with false statement.

USCIS extends flexibility for responding to agency requests

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is extending the flexibilities it announced on March 30 to assist applicants and petitioners who are responding to:

- Requests for Evidence;
- Continuations to Request Evidence (N-14);
- Notices of Intent to Deny;
- Notices of Intent to Revoke;
- Notices of Intent to Rescind and Notices of Intent to Terminate regional investment centers; and
- Filing date requirements for Form I-290B, Notice of Appeal or Motion.

This flexibility applies to these documents if the issuance date listed on the request, notice or decision is between March 1 and July 1, 2020, inclusive.

Response due date

USCIS will consider a response to the above requests and notices received within 60 calendar days after the response due date set in the request or notice before taking action. USCIS will consider a Form I-290B received up to 60 calendar days from the date of the decision before it takes any action.

USCIS is adopting several measures to protect its workforce and community and to minimize the immigration consequences for those seeking immigration benefits during this time.

USCIS will provide further updates as the situation develops and will continue to follow CDC guidance. Education and precautions are the strongest tools against COVID-19 infection. ***(PR)***

Waiting game continues for PSS

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Public School System has not received allocation yet from the CARES Act and is still playing the waiting game while also looking for other sources of funding since they have been allocated close to nothing since the government shutdown back in March.

According to PSS Federal Programs officer Tim Thornburgh, PSS has received no allocation from the CARES Act as of last weekend, and no notice of when they will receive the funds.

PSS is dependent on the CARES Act funding to pay teachers their missed payrolls, PSS vendors, and PSS operations.

Thornburgh said he has already written to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP), who chairs the U.S. Department of Labor Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education subcommittee, in regards to the funding.

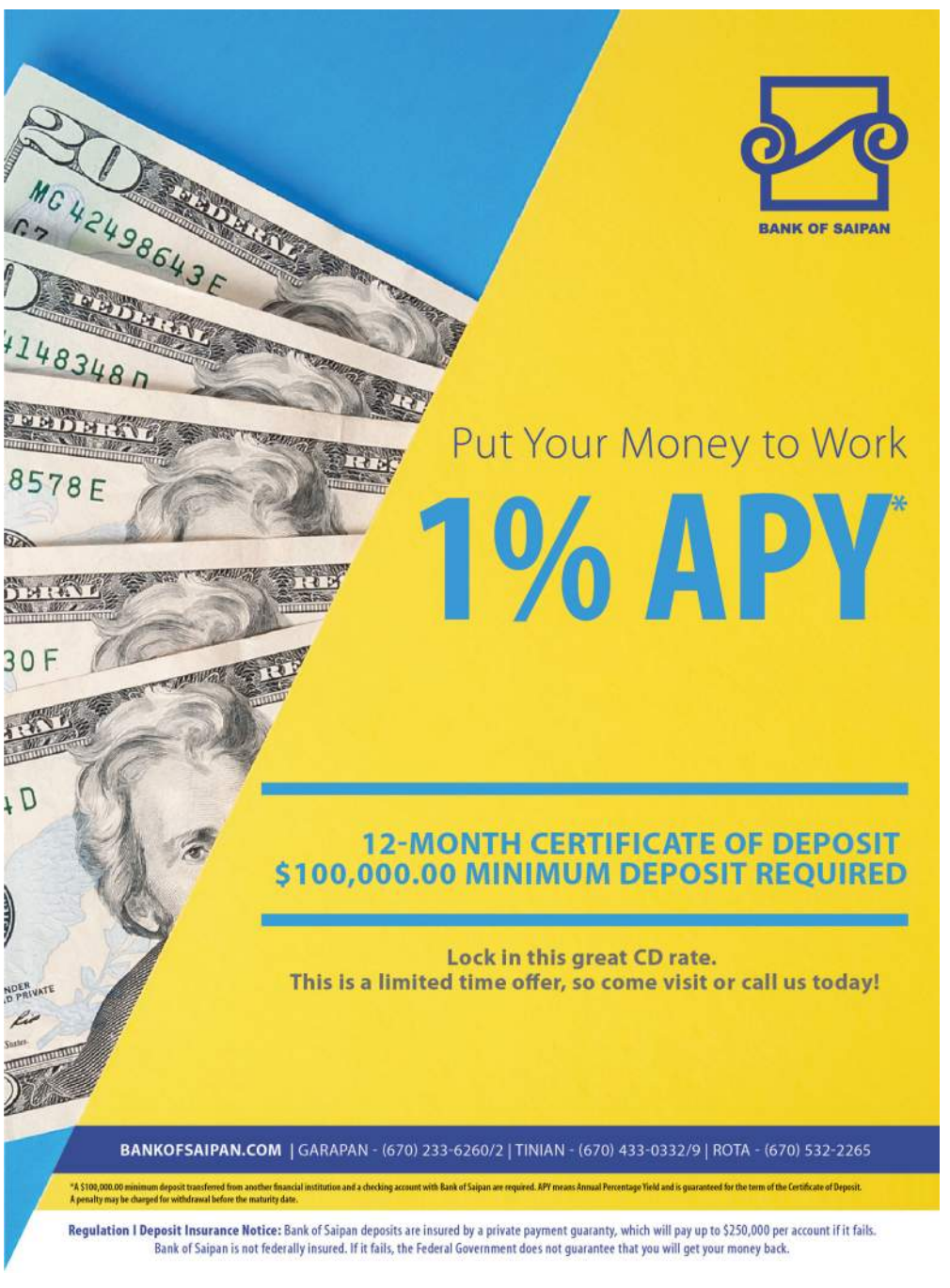
"We have not yet received our allocation. I sent a long email to our congressman [with] suggestions on how to move things along and I'm hopeful he will be able to get to the department. They've made all the allocations except for the insular areas, there's no excuse for them to dilly-dally any longer and I suggested to him that if we don't get an immediate response, as the chair of the subcommittee of elementary and secondary education, he can always call for an oversight meeting," Thornburgh said.

PSS has yet to receive a response from Sablan.

The Public School System, backed by all five Board of Education members, have started the process of applying for a $5 million loan with the Marianas Public Land Trust.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada has already written to MPLT to ask it to lend PSS $5 million for a term of 90 days. In Ada's letter to MPLT chair Martin B. Ada dated March 27, he said that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has crippled PSS from performing its duties. Ada said in his letter that BOE and PSS are willing to execute a memorandum of agreement with MPLT to ensure that PSS meets all of the terms of its 90-day loan proposal.

According to Ada's letter, PSS' loan will be "guaranteed" by the over $12 million it expects to receive through the federal Education Stabilization Fund under the COVID-19 economic stimulus aid.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DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

CUC losing 24% of power demand

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

» **Residential customers' power bill up by about 5% even as bill of commercial customers drop**

» **Central gov't pays $1.3M in utility billing last month**

The COVID-19 pandemic is causing the power billing of residential customers to go up, and power billing of commercial establishments to go down, according to Commonwealth Utilities Corp. executive director Gary P. Camacho.

With people staying home due to the closure of businesses, governments offices, and schools due to COVID-19, CUC's power revenue from residential customers has increased about 5%, Camacho said in an interview last Friday. He doesn't see such an increase is "too much."

CUC, however, is losing significantly from commercial customers because many businesses have closed down. Camacho said he has no information as to the exact amount of the drop in CUC power revenue from commercial customers but he said his information is that the overall power demand alone has decreased by 24% since last January.

He was quick to add, though that the closure of businesses is good to fight the pandemic. "Health is paramount. Health is the forefront of any effort," said Camacho adding that the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. and Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres have been doing well in fighting the spread of the virus. He said CUC wants to continue assisting CHCC and the government.

During CUC board of directors' meeting last Friday, Camacho reported that CUC Power Division's electrical engineers began last April 7 the assessment of power distribution services to the ongoing construction of the Commonwealth Health Center field hospital at CHCC's upper level parking lot. He said an assessment for power distribution services involves the design of a power connection set-up that will connect the field hospital to the existing power distribution lines.

"The engineering design of the power connection set-up will reference CHCC's load calculation in order to properly supply CUC power to all medical equipment housed in the field hospital," he said.

Camacho said the field hospital will service a treatment center for future patients infected with COVID-19 and is part of a preparedness and infection control measure supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

As for billing collections from the central government, Camacho disclosed that the government paid CUC $1.39 million last month, and that the more the government pays CUC, the more that helps the consumer side.

"We need to get payments. Our only concern is collection. We've got to get payments in order to sustain," he said.

Camacho said they are dependent on the payments for services rendered from the month before. "Wwe are dependent on the revenues from the month before to sustain the month after," he added.

Last month Camacho disclosed that the central government owes CUC $9 million.

BMV still closed but expired docs are extended

With the Bureau of Motor Vehicles still closed, all recently expired driver's licenses and vehicle registrations will have their expiration dates extended.

For example, if your CNMI driver's license or vehicle registration expires during the temporary closure of BMV, you will be granted a waiver without penalty until BMV reopens for normal operation. An official announcement will be sent out to the public once the BMV office is scheduled to reopen.

Police officers conducting patrol are aware of this and are mindful of recently expired driver's licenses and vehicle registrations. Motorists are asked to notify their insurance provider(s) as a courtesy.

The BMV was temporarily closed on March 16, 2020, as part of the nationwide concern of the coronavirus.

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and the CNMI Department of Public Safety advises the public to refrain from making unnecessary trips to public places. Limit public exposure to grocery store trips and food pick-ups.

Under current regulations, all expired driver's licenses have a grace period of 30 working days after the expiration date for renewal before a $20 penalty fee is owed. All expired vehicle registrations have a grace period of 10 days after the expiration date for renewal before a $30 penalty fee is owed. ***(PR)***

Treasury confirms $36M remitted to CNMI

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The U.S. Treasury Department has confirmed with Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) that the Commonwealth government should have already received $36 million in coronavirus relief funds from the CARES Act last week.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security, or "CARES," Act provided $150 billion for state, local, and tribal governments to manage the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and all funds have now been paid out. Funds were distributed in part by population, although non-state areas, like the Marianas, received about $702 per person, as compared to an average $424 per person in mainland U.S.

"Congress gave the U.S. Treasury until April 24 to transfer the money to state and territorial governments; and Treasury now tells me they made the deadline," Sablan said. "But there is a lot more money in the CARES Act that has not yet reached the individuals it is supposed to be helping. There are unemployment payments, money for teachers and schools, recovery rebates of $1,200 and $2,400 for single and joint taxpayers—people need this support now."

Relief funds can be used in many ways

Sablan said that he has not yet seen the Commonwealth's plan of expenditure for the $36 million. Congress required the money be used for coronavirus-related expenses that were not foreseen in a state or territory's current budget. And the money must be spent by Dec. 30 or returned to the federal government.

"The public has a right to know exactly how this money is going to be used," Sablan said.

In guidance to states and territories receiving the relief funds, Treasury gave many examples of acceptable uses. Coronavirus-related expenses of public hospitals, the expense of setting up temporary public medical facilities, and the costs of providing testing were at the top of the list, along with the purchase of sanitizing products and personal protective equipment for essential workers most at risk.

The unbudgeted payroll expenses of these essential workers—medical personnel, police, social workers and child welfare officers, and those providing services directly to older adults and individuals with disabilities in community settings—are also acceptable uses of the CARES Act money.

One permissible use Sablan strongly favors is assistance to the Public School System to make online learning viable for all Marianas students. "Even wealthier school districts in America are finding it a challenge to teach online," Sablan said. "And it is that much more difficult here in the Marianas, where so many students do not have access to their own computer and their households do not have high-speed internet.

"Of course, we have to stay focused first on keeping the Marianas healthy. But would it not be great to use this present crisis and the money Congress provided, also, to do something truly transformative for our future leaders, business and professional people, and teachers, who are in school today? That kind of investment would pay economic dividends for decades," Sablan said.

The $36 million in relief funds can also be used to smooth over the economic disruption caused by the coronavirus. Grants to small businesses and unemployment payments for workers not covered by the CARES Act unemployment assistance are also permitted uses of the money.

"It is possible people will fall through the cracks on unemployment aid," Sablan said. "We will not know until the Commonwealth gets the program up and running. But, if there are people out of work and not eligible for the CARES Act unemployment aid, the relief funds can help them."

Sablan made direct aid to territorial governments one of the four key priorities he pushed for during negotiation of the CARES Act. And he was able to make those priorities the bipartisan consensus among all the island Delegates in Congress.

As negotiations begin on a CARES Act II, more direct aid with even more flexibility continues to be a priority for Democrats in Congress. A Democratic alternative to the CARES Act had twice the funding, but Senate Republicans blocked that additional aid the first time around. ***(PR)***

Da'ok Academy construction is a go

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The construction of the new Da'Ok Academy is set to begin soon, according to Board of Education vice chair Herman Atalig, who oversees the committee that is tasked with campus development under the Public School System.

According to Atalig, they received a notice to proceed with the construction of the new Da'Ok Academy last week.

The new facility will be built at the Saipan Southern High School campus.

Da'ok Academy principal Jonathan Aguon said the decision to build the academy at the SSHS campus came to be because, compared to the academy's original site at Marianas High School, SSHS is much bigger and can accommodate the facility.

The proposed facility includes a total of five classrooms for all five Da'ok Academy teachers, two office spaces, and an assembly area that will double as a cafeteria.

Aguon added that relocating the campus to SSHS instead of MHS would provide Da'ok Academy with field space that they never had. Ultimately, Aguon said, relocating to SHSS would be better for the school's students in the long run since the Northern Marianas Technical Institute, which works in partnership with the academy, is also relocating to the south.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, the Federal Emergency Management Agency allocated $1.5 million to rebuild the Da'ok Academy, which is a school for at-risk youth.

EARTHQUAKE ROUNDUP

4.3-magnitude quake shakes Rota

At 8:55am on May 2, 2020, a report of a 4.3-magnitude earthquake occurred 26 kilometers north of Rota in the Northern Mariana Islands. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, call the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 237-8000. ***(PR)***

4.4-magnitude temblor hits Guam

At 8:52am on May 2, 2020, a report of a 4.4-magnitude earthquake occurred 28 kilometers north of Yigo, Guam. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories from the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 237-8000. ***(PR)***

4.2-magnitude quake on Pagan

At 3:43am on May 2, 2020, a report of a 4.2-magnitude earthquake occurred 4.2 kilometers northwest of Pagan in the Northern Mariana Islands. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories from the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 237-8000. ***(PR)***

4.9-magnitude quake hits Dededo

At 5:15am on May 4, 2020, a report of a 4.9-magnitude earthquake occurred 25 kilometers northwest of Dededo Village, Guam. Currently, there are no tsunami warnings or advisories from the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the CNMI EOC State Warning Point at 237-8000. ***(PR)***

PUBLIC AUCTION NOTICE
USED OUTBOARD MOTORS

CPA-PAN-001-20

Notice is hereby given that the Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) will sell at Public Auction, May 05, 2020 at 10:00 A.M. 2 units' outboard motors located at the CPA Building, Port of Saipan.

Brand: Mercury
Horse Power: 90

A minimum bid is set at $1,000.00. The motors are sold "As Is" and "Where Is" and without Warranty. The successful bidder is required to pay 20% down payment at CPA Seaport Office on acceptance of bid. Balance shall be payable at the CPA Accounting Office, Saipan International Airport within 5 calendar days from auction closing date. The outboard motors will be released to the buyer upon full payment of the bid amount. Failure to pay in full will result in the forfeiture of the down payment. Payment shall be in cash, cashier's check, or money order payable to CPA.

CPA assumes no responsibility for any costs incurred by bidder's in their preparation of the bids.

Inquiries and inspection may be directed to the Procurement Officer, Mr. Alex C. Tudela, at telephone number 237-6563 or 483-6501.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE
PUBLIC NOTICE

The U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) is considering a request for Federal assistance from Northern Marianas College (NMC) to construct two on-campus facilities in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), EDA is conducting an assessment of the potential of the proposed project to affect the environment and/or historic properties.

The project involves construction of two new facilities on the northeast corner of the NMC campus in As Terlaje, Saipan:

The Workforce Development and Training Center would consist of a 3-story building with about 20,200 square feet of floor space and a building footprint of approximately 65 feet by 105 feet, housing classrooms, laboratories, and faculty offices.

The Center for Research, Extension, and Development would consist of a 2-story building with about 25,000 square feet of floor space and a building footprint of approximately 80 feet by 160 feet, housing laboratories, a multi-purpose room, and administrative and program offices.

Project information is available for review via e-mail request by contacting Mr. William Torres at william.torres@marianas.edu or Ms. Patricia Coleman at patricia.coleman@marianas.edu

If you have any information regarding potential impacts environmental resources or historic properties associated with this proposed project, please provide it in writing to:

Regional Environmental Officer
US Department of Commerce
Economic Development Administration
915 Second Avenue, Room 1890
Seattle, WA 98174
rdimmick@eda.gov

Comments received in the EDA Regional Office by 5:00 pm Pacific Time on May 21, 2020 will be considered. A copy of the NEPA/NHPA decisional document will be available upon request at the above EDA Regional Office.

Phone numbers for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance

The CNMI Department of Labor continues to work with the U.S. Department of Labor in launching the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program and the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation program.

"The CNMI's PUA Implementation Plan is in review by the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration. This week, CNMI DOL is in training sessions for Phase One of the Plan, which is the Initial Claims process. Another training session this week is for the Adjudication and Determinations. At the same time, DOL staff continue to ensure that the services are provided to the public, as much as possible," said Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente.

CNMI DOL understands the public has many questions about these new programs. "We understand the need and importance for these programs to be implemented quickly, correctly, and securely. At this time, there are still many CNMI specific aspects to operations and logistics that are being finalized with our federal partners. As soon as that operational programming is completed and approved by USDOL, CNMI DOL will publish community resources and guidance," added Benavente.

If you have general questions regarding the PUA and FPUC programs, you may call any of the dedicated phone numbers for PUA/FPUC information between the hours of 8am and 12pm, Monday to Friday. The phone numbers are 989-9090, 989-9089, 989-9084, 989-9083, 989-9081, or 989-9080.

If CNMI DOL is unable to answer your questions at the time of your call, you will receive a callback. If you cannot get through the line, try again or email info@puamarianas.com. Please do not send personal or sensitive information via email.

These numbers are subject to change and may be reassigned to certain PUA/FPUC functions after implementation, such as processing appeals or reporting fraud. For the latest contact information and guidance, visit the website at marianaslabor.net or governor.gov.mp. ***(PR)***

ISOLATED

From Page 1

"We are the most isolated community on the planet," Ige told The Associated Press last week. "As such, we've got to be more self-reliant, but we also had the opportunity to enact a quarantine, make it meaningful and most importantly, know that we could really dramatically reduce the number of visitors we get."

With more than 2,000 miles (3,220 kilometers) of ocean separating it from the rest of the world, Hawaii has an advantage over other remote states with low rates of infection and death. Unlike Alaska, Montana and Wyoming, there's no driving or taking a train to the islands, so fewer people will be arriving and spreading the disease as businesses begin to reopen.

But the travel restrictions have walloped an economy dependent on tourism, and they will be among the last to end, officials say. Hawaii now has one of the nation's highest unemployment rates.

"The sacrifice of keeping our community safe and healthy," Ige said, "has come at the expense of more than 225,000 residents who are now unemployed"—about a third of Hawaii's workforce.

Of the few places in the world with no confirmed COVID-19 infections, nearly all are islands in the Pacific.

American Samoa, a U.S. territory west of Hawaii, is the nation's only jurisdiction with no cases to date. Officials have asked Hawaiian Airlines to halt daily flights from Honolulu to try to stay virus-free, and travelers must quarantine for two weeks.

Every other U.S. state and territory, including the islands of Guam and Puerto Rico, have the virus. Once there, it's hard to contain, especially if visitors keep arriving.

Hawaii became the first state to require travelers to quarantine, and others have followed, though enforcement has been spotty.

Hawaii has arrested several tourists for breaking quarantine, which can mean a $5,000 fine and up to one year in jail. More than 200 visitors arrived on Friday.

COVID-19

From Page 1

have ended up testing positive again," said Jon Borja, a Kagman resident. He also stated that if Saipan opens up in the next couple of months, tourist and/or returning residents should get tested and wait for their results while in quarantine.

"Even if they appear to be okay, we'll never know so it's best if the governor makes it mandatory for everyone coming to the island," he added.

The drive-thru tests are administered by a team from the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

Dr. Beth Kohnen, CHCC's deputy chief medical officer, stated that if an individual has a certificate from the Guam health department that they have tested negative for COVID-19 within the last 72 hours of their arrival, they are released early.

Additionally, Esther Muña, chief executive officer of CHCC, assured that the thrice-a-week United Airlines flights from Guam to Saipan, will not disrupt the mass testing at the airport. She said the testing will be held from 1pm to 4pm on the days of the flights.

Jane (not her real name) speaks for the many people who is intimidated by the idea of getting tested for COVID-19. "I've seen clips on the internet of people getting tested for the virus and it just makes me uneasy," said. That's one of the reasons why she doesn't want to get tested.

Another resident stated that even if it's free, he's been staying home and has been more than careful when he goes out shopping. He said he doesn't feel the need to get tested that because of his social distancing, good hygiene, and always staying home.

To date, the CNMI has 14 confirmed cases, with 12 recoveries and two deaths.

COVID-19 in Guam

The Department of Public Health and Social Services tested 81 individuals for COVID-19 on May 3. One tested positive through DPHSS and 79 tested negative for SARS-CoV-2. The results include samples from clinics, hospitals, the quarantine facility, and samples from the COVID-19 expanded testing at the Hemlani Apartments in Harmon.

Six people previously released from isolation have returned to active isolation status.

To date, 149 cases have been confirmed through COVID-19 testing, with five deaths and 126 released from isolation.

IHG

From Page 1

Plaza Resort Saipan in 2022 following a refurbishment, before adding a 116-room extension by 2025.

IHG announced in October 2019 that it has taken on management of the 318-room Fiesta Resort Guam, a hotel that will rebrand as a Crowne Plaza in 2021. Together with the Saipan property, this makes the combined 850 room count the biggest ever conversion signing for IHG's Australasia, Japan and Pacific Islands region.

Fiesta Resort Saipan features six dining outlets and a club lounge, and also offers four meeting rooms, a 300-person ballroom, a gym, multiple swimming pools, retail area, and a 500-meter beach frontage.

"We are honoured to build on our relationship with Asia Pacific Hotels Inc. as they put their trust in IHG to take on a another of their great hotels, Fiesta Resort [& Spa] Saipan, and rebrand it as a Crowne Plaza," said **A**bhijay Sandilya, IHG vice president, Development, Australasia, Japan & Pacific. "Saipan, and Micronesia more broadly, is a favourite destination for travelers from around the world, and from Korea, China and Japan in particular, and we will draw on IHG's deep expertise in catering to guests from these markets. We look forward to growing the resort's footprint with our world-class Crowne Plaza brand."

IHG has extensive experience in operating hotels and resorts that cater to Japanese, Korean and Chinese guests, with more than 400 hotels across China and Korea, and 32 hotels in Japan, including InterContinental resorts in Okinawa and the ANA InterContinental Beppu Resort and Spa, which opened in August last year.

"Since we partnered with IHG in October 2019 our relationship has gone from strength to strength, and we are delighted to hand over the operations of our Fiesta Resorts in Guam and Saipan to IHG," said Jennifer Tan Su, EVP of Asia Pacific Hotels Inc. "Saipan enjoys great hotel fundamentals, stable tourism and moderately long average stays, but has a distinct lack of great, internationally branded hotels, so we knew we needed a global brand like Crowne Plaza to attract guests from around the world to bring a new level of hospitality to Saipan. We are excited for the next phase of growth for this fantastic hotel, and look forward to growing the partnership with IHG."

Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan will join the brand in its most exciting era of transformation, as Crowne Plaza rolls out its global flagship strategy. The first six flagship hotels have started to open across Europe, the United States, and China, illustrating the new hallmark design innovation and brand standards across technology, public spaces (the "Plaza Workspace"), guest rooms, food & beverage, and more. The new design is inspired by the continued guest demand for flexible spaces, offering seamless transition between business and downtime for the modern traveller.

IHG currently has 85 hotels operating under six brands in Australasia, Japan, and the Pacific Islands, including: InterContinental, Crowne Plaza, Holiday Inn, voco, Hotel Indigo, and Holiday Inn Express, with another 42 in the pipeline, including Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants. ***(PR/ Saipan Tribune)***

TO-DO

From Page 1

is supposed to be spent according to strict guidance and limitations set for states and territories by the U.S. Department of Treasury.

As such, the funding can only be used to cover costs that are necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to COVID-19; costs that were not accounted for in the CNMI's fiscal year 2020 budget; and costs that were incurred beginning March 1, 2020.

In line with this, Finance Secretary David Atalig said the $36 million allocated to the CNMI will be used for health care and community response to the coronavirus outbreak in line with the health care needs of the CNMI population and the guidelines provided by the White House Coronavirus Task Force.

"This new pool of resources has certainly provided relief to the costs associated with the CNMI government's response to the global outbreak of COVID-19. The additional $36 million will provide the resources to pay the many obligations associated with ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our community against this threat," said Atalig.

The CNMI expenditure plan for this allotment of CARES Act funding includes:

- $11 million for the procurement of COVID-19 test kits, Personal Protective Equipment, first aid kits, disinfectant sprays, and sanitation equipment.
- $6.4 million for capitalized fixed assets, which include ventilators, Intensive Care Unit beds, monitors, portable x-rays, ultrasounds, infusion pumps and COVID-19 detection kits.
- $6 million for services provided by health care professionals, sanitation and disinfection services, engineering services and laboratory testing professionals.
- $1,512,500 for the construction of the Medical Care and Treatment Site, which is outside of the Commonwealth Health Center, construction for alternative medical sites, and costs associated with renovation for social distancing measures and protective shielding in commonly visited offices.
- $10 million to support payroll expenses of first responders in public safety, human services, ancillary services, and support staff related to the COVID-19 emergency and response.
- $200,000 for rental costs of the off-site quarantine facilities.
- $1,171,717.70 in assorted related expenses, including meals for individuals in quarantine, communications, travel cost of chartered cargo flights for PPE equipment and supplies, and office expenses.

This is a total of $36,284,217.70 for costs covered under the U.S. Department of Treasury guidance.

Many of the expenses made against the resources provided under the Coronavirus Relief Funds have been expended throughout the response to the outbreak.

"If it were not for this funding source, the CNMI would have to ensure these costs associated with procuring testing and protective supplies, safeguarding our front-liners and increasing the capacity of our health care system to meet the threat of this global pandemic with our limited local resources," said Atalig. "However, the CNMI's financial situation has been severely impacted by the loss of our tourism sector, the increasing jobless rate within the private sector and the diminishing government resources as a result."

Atalig clarified that this funding only covers public health expenditures and does not cover Economic Impact Payments, better known as the "stimulus checks." That is a separate source of funding.

"The CARES Act funding for the stimulus checks for the CNMI have not been processed because the [Internal Revenue Service] is still processing the funds before we disburse it through our Division of Revenue and Taxation. According to the IRS, the funds will be received by mid-May, but the governor and our department continue to expedite this because we want to get this money into the hands of our residents as soon as possible. We will make sure our people get their stimulus checks, and we will assist everyone if they need further documentation," he said.

"I am thankful that Gov. [Ralph DLG] Torres joined with governors across the nation in requesting Congress to recognize the severe strain all of our government finances are under because of this pandemic. We require federal assistance that directly supports the massive budget shortfalls that are affecting our ability to maintain public services," said Atalig. ***(PR)***

Ogumoro conviction affirmed in part, reversed in part

The CNMI Supreme Court has affirmed Ambrosio T. Ogumoro's jury conviction of the theft by deception but reversed his conviction of misconduct in public office.

The high court made the decision in its opinion in *Commonwealth v. Ambrosio T. Ogumoro* that it issued on April 30, 2020.

The trial court found Ogumoro, when he was deputy commissioner of the Department of Public Safety, deceived DPS by allowing a DPS vehicle to be surveyed as scrap when it was actually of greater value. He was convicted for theft by deception and misconduct in public office. The trial court sentenced him to six years of imprisonment, all suspended, and placed him on probation with conditions to write a public apology letter, pay $2,500 in restitution, and endure a ban from government employment for 10 years.

The Supreme Court affirmed his conviction for theft by deception, finding there was sufficient evidence for each of the elements. It found the trial court did not make a mistake in considering evidence that the vehicle was later determined to have greater value. The trial court also did not err by allowing, but ultimately striking from the record, evidence of safety inspections and their impact on a determination of the vehicle's value. The high court held that allowing the Commonwealth's witness to testify about technical information but not allowing Ogumoro's expert witness to testify were errors, though not ones that affected the verdict. It also found the prosecutor's statements in closing arguments at trial to be errors that did not affect the verdict. When considered together, these errors did not change the verdict or impact Ogumoro's right to a fair trial, and so they did not require reversal of his conviction. Ogumoro's misconduct in public office count was reversed, and the Supreme Court remanded the case for resentencing, deciding not to reach Ogumoro's sentencing arguments.

The high court's full opinion is available at 2020 MP 8. For further information, contact the Supreme Court at 236-9800. ***(PR)***

CUC vice chair: Best option is reduction in hours rather than reduction in force

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Faced with a drop in revenue and trying to find ways to cut costs, the best option for the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. right now is to reduce the work hours of its the employees rather than a reduction in force.

At least that's what CUC board vice chair Weston Deleon Guerrero believes. He said the matter was discussed during the CUC board meeting held via video conference last week and that it was the CUC management's recommendation not to implement 72 hours work schedule, but only if CUC's finances cannot permit the 80 hours, then they look at other options.

Deleon Guerrero did not specifically say whether the board approved the management's recommendation or not. He, however, stated that the best option at this time would be a reduction in hours, rather than a reduction in force.

Deleon Guerrero

"But because of the complexity of each and everyone's contract at CUC, we the board needed to give or allow an option to the executive director," Deleon Guerrero said.

He said that, right now, without the board's motion to approve allowing executive director Gary P. Camacho this authority to cut hours, then his option would only be a reduction in force.

He said that's why Camacho and his team had asked for the board to approve this opportunity to do this reduction in hours because of the contracts.

"It's an optional addendum that would go out to each and every one of the employees. They would have the option of signing or not signing if it came down to that," Deleon Guerrero said.

In an interview last Friday when the CUC directors were still in an executive session to discuss the reduction of hours issue, Camacho said that, based on their current policy, reduction in force is the only option available to him. Camacho does not believe that's this would be best for CUC right now because they are already short by over 100 full-time employees. Right now, they need to ensure that they operate the system safely, efficiently and effectively, he added.

"We believe that, with all the different methodologies and cost savings out there…in our specific situation, austerity would be the best approach," he said.

He said it is imperative that they try to do that so they continue to have the expertise on hand in all areas of the corporation to be able to continue to operate the system. Camacho said it is imperative that they have a safe working environment, with the expertise on site.

He said there is a number of different things ongoing with the variety of different grants and restoration effort between them. "It is imperative that all of it is being addressed at the same time all the time. And we believe that this methodology, this approach would be the best to ensure that…we reach our economic goal with cost reduction but not sacrifice… any of the safety and the expertise and the requirements of each project," he said.

Camacho said he believes 72 hours per payroll is needed for the time being.

"Don't get me wrong. There's a lot of internal cost savings we've been doing all the time. We do that all the time. We were more aggressive to do earlier this year, January. And we're doing even more implementation of cost cutting and making more sacrifices along the way," he said.

UOG distributes CARES Act funds to students

The University of Guam began the distribution of CARES Act funds to its students yesterday. In this first round, 487 students will receive funds through direct deposit or by mail. Full-time students will receive $747.03, and part-time students will receive $560.27.

"We were notified of the availability of funds on Friday, and our Business Office immediately went to work processing payments to our students," said UOG president Thomas W. Krise. "We know our students need these funds to help them manage the disruption of their education, and we will continue pushing to get the funds to all eligible students as soon as possible."

Checks are being disbursed to eligible students as they are verified to ensure full compliance with rules provided by the U.S. Department of Education. Students who have filed a valid FAFSA for the 2019-20 or 2020-21 academic years will be verified first.

For more information about CARES Act aid eligibility and other updates, visit www.uog.edu/cares-act. ***(PR)***

Lawsuit vs Star Marianas over fatal crash dismissed

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Superior Court has dismissed a lawsuit filed by a China-based travel agency against Star Marianas Air Inc. over a plane crash on Tinian in 2013 that killed three persons, including its pilot, and injured four others.

In an order last week granting Star Marianas Air's motion to dismiss the lawsuit, Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho found that Foshan Tianning International Travel Ltd. failed to state a basis for its claim of vicarious liability, a legal doctrine that assigns liability for an injury to a person who did not cause the injury but who has a particular legal relationship to the person who did act negligently.

Camacho found that Foshan also failed to allege that it extinguished Star Marianas' liability to third-parties.

Star Marianas Air flies aircraft between Tinian and Saipan and also flies to Guam and Rota. It has temporarily suspended passenger operations, but continues to transport cargo and provide emergency medical flights.

The judge said that Foshan's complaint plead that there were suits filed by the passengers involved in the crash against certain companies in China. Camacho said Foshan's complaint also plead certain amounts that Foshan has allegedly been obligated to pay because of these lawsuits in China. However, Camacho said, Foshan's complaint neither identified any of the lawsuits nor any of the judgments in China. He found that the complaint failed to state whether the alleged lawsuits in China extinguished any liability payable by Star Marianas to the passengers involved in the crash. Camacho found that the complaint failed to claim that Star Marianas has had its liability extinguished by third-parties.

According to court records, a Star Marianas flight took off from Tinian on Oct. 6, 2013, and crashed before reaching Saipan, which killed several people and severely injured others. Four of the passengers involved in the crash—three survivors and one fatality—made their initial booking through Zhejiang Waihai Star International Travel Co. Ltd. (Waihai). Waihai then contracted with additional companies in China and on Saipan to provide for the transportation and accommodations sold to customers in China.

Waihai contracted with Everbright International Travel Co. Ltd. to make travel arrangements for Waihai customers. Everbright, in turn, contracted with Foshan, with Foshan responsible for arranging flight tickets, local itinerary, accommodations, and other local travel arrangements. Foshan, in turn, contracted with Saipan Travel to make travel arrangements on Saipan and Tinian. Saipan Travel is a company based in the CNMI.

Based on a contract/agreement between Saipan Travel and Star Marianas, Saipan Travel arranged for air transportation for its customers between Tinian and Saipan as part of prearranged tour packages.

One of the injured passengers, Lei Wang, sued Waihai in China in 2014 for compensation for her injuries in the crash. Foshan was determined to be liable to Waihai for indemnification and paid her 1,065,680 yuan as an advance settlement.

Lei Wang prevailed in her lawsuit against Waihai and Waihai was ordered to pay her 980,463 yuan, plus a case processing fee of 13,605 yuan.

In 2014, another passenger in the crash, Peng Liang Cai, filed a lawsuit in China against Waihai to recover damages for serious injuries sustained in the crash.

Peng Liang Cai also prevailed in his lawsuit against Waihai, and the company was ordered to pay him 410,03 yuan, plus a case processing fee of 7,459 yuan.

In 2014, the three injured passengers in the crash also filed suit against Waihai for the death of a fourth passenger, Zhang Xiao Lei, who was related to the first three.

In 2016, Waihai filed a lawsuit in China against Everbright for indemnification. Waihai prevailed and Everbright was ordered to pay Waihai 1,067,126 yuan representing Waihai's liability to the passengers in the crash minus Foshan's advance payments.

The three passengers prevailed in this lawsuit, and Waihai was ordered to pay them 785,616 yuan, plus a case processing fee of 12,271 yuan.

In 2016, the China Union Property Insurance Co. Ltd. filed suit against Foshan and Everbright to recover funds paid out as a result of the crash. CPUC prevailed and Foshan and Everbright were held jointly and severally liable to pay to CPUC 500,000 yuan, plus a case processing fee of 8,800 yuan.

In 2019, Everbright filed suit against Foshan to recover costs incurred as a result of litigation related to the crash. Everbright's suit filed in China seeks compensation in the amount of 1,102,818 yuan.

In this lawsuit, filed in August 2018 in the Superior Court, Foshan's complaint states that, as a result of Star Marianas' alleged negligence, Foshan has been held vicariously liable and required to pay 2,677,298 yuan, or approximately $423,817. Foshan claims that it is without fault in regards to the crash, and without its relationship with Star Marianas, it would not be liable for damages in any way. Furthermore, Foshan claims that because of the relationship between Foshan and Star Marianas, Foshan has been held vicariously liable for damages.

Foshan further claims that its vicarious liability is the direct and proximate result of Star Marianas' conduct. As a result, Foshan claims it is entitled to complete indemnification by Star Marianas for all sums for which Foshan has been held liable in relation to the crash, plus costs of defense, costs of suit, and reasonable attorney's fees incurred.

Star Marianas moved to dismiss the lawsuit. In granting Star Marianas' motion, Camacho said the complaint failed to specify what type of relationship, if any, allegedly existed between Foshan and Star Marianas. Camacho said Foshan failed to plead enough allegations to provide "fair notice of the nature of the action" to put Star Marianas on notice.

Bruce Berline is counsel for Foshan, while Timothy H. Bellas is counsel for Star Marianas.

'CARES Act covers COVID-19 treatment'

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

If you ever get sick from the coronavirus, your treatment will be covered by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, according to Esther Muña, chief executive officer of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

And even if the CARES Act didn't exist to foot the bill for your treatment, CHCC still provides inpatient services whether a patient is insured or not, Muña assured, adding that this is what uncompensated care is for.

Uncompensated care is health care or services provided by hospitals or health care providers that don't get reimbursed. Often, uncompensated care occurs in places when people don't have insurance and cannot afford to pay the cost of care.

"The difference between then and now is not because you can get the service without paying, but it is that now we can actually file a claim and get paid for it," said Muña.

In related news, TanHoldings and its charitable arm, the Tan Siu Lin Foundation, donated and delivered 585 care packages to CHCC last May 1.

The packages were delivered to CHCC, Emergency Operations Center, Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, Department of Public Safety, and friends who are contract workers.

Through Tan Holdings, CHCC also received 15,000 face masks and 5,000 face masks from Northern Mariana Islands Football Association.

Quarantine procedures

According to Beth Kohnen, deputy chief medical officer of CHCC, the Commonwealth Office of Transit Authority escort all passengers arriving on Saipan to the Pacific Islands Clubs in San Antonio, where they will undergo the mandatory quarantine.

Once the passengers are at PIC, they will then receive their luggage, then proceed to go through customs and quarantine. The passengers will get their temperatures screened.

"If they're doing well, they get sent to their room at PIC," said Kohnen.

According to Kohnen, the passengers have two choices: they can stay 14 days in quarantine, or they can get tested for the virus and, once their results are in and they're negative, they can leave quarantine early.

"We are anticipating that most people will be able to leave within five days, instead of 14 days," said Kohnen.

Additionally, those with Guam health department certificates stating they have tested negative for COVID-19 within the last 72 hours are released as well.

To date, there are 38 people quarantined at PIC.

VEHICULAR FIRE

This car appears to have slammed into a concrete power pole and engulfed BY fire on the shoulder of a hill on Tun Joaquin Doi Road near the corner of Tun Antonio Apa Road in Fina Sisu Sunday night. According to the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, the fire was reported Sunday at 11:39pm and DFEMS firefighters arrived at the scene at 11:43pm. The fire, of still unknown cause, was controlled yesterday, Monday, at 12:10am. No one was reported injured. No other details of the accident were available as of press time yesterday.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

THINGS TO KNOW

As of May 4, 2020. All information may change without prior notice. For corrections and additions to this list, send an email to editor@saipantribune.com or call 235-6397 or 235-2440.

SBA Fact Sheet

The U.S. Small Business Administration has issued a "Fact Sheet for the CNMI" about the Paycheck Protection Program and Economic Injury Disaster Loans. Read it by clicking on the link at www.saipantribune.com.

Commerce Department in operation

The CNMI Department of Commerce will continue to provide services to the CNMI business community via means of teleworking.

For direct support and services, the CNMI is advised to contact the support team via the department's website at info@commerce.gov.mp and indicate the attention to the respective division or section for the appropriate services. See DOC advisory at the link at www.saipantribune.com.

FBI alert vs online scams

FBI issue an alert to the public to be on the lookout for scams that exploit the current COVID-19 pandemic. See FBI advisory at the link on www.saipantribune.com.

Process for mass testing

Mass testing for COVID-19 is ongoing at the Saipan International Airport. The test is free. People interested in being tested for COVID-19 can request for an appointment for specimen collection on the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. website at https://chcc.gov.mp/covid19testing.php or over the phone through the COVID-19 Info Line. For more information, see link at www.saipantribune.com.

USDA takes steps to help

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development has taken a number of immediate actions to help rural residents, businesses and communities affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. Rural Development will keep our customers, partners, and stakeholders continuously updated as more actions are taken to better serve rural America. Visit www.rd.usda.gov/coronavirus for more information. Or click on https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USDARD/bulletins/2894700.

Island Snapshots

COAST GUARD/USCGC MIDGETT

The crew of the Coast Guard cutter *Midgett* launches their small boat with a boarding team to conduct law enforcement boardings to ensure compliance with international fisheries regulations and counter illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing in the Pacific Ocean last April 23, 2020. Patrolling over 7,118 square nautical miles (8,191 statute miles), the *Midgett*'s law enforcement team boarded seven commercial foreign-flagged fishing vessels. The boardings verified compliance with WCPFC conservation management measures and specifications for the marking and identification of fishing vessels. They conducted 15 additional sightings and vessel queries.

GUARDING VS ILLEGAL FISHING

COAST GUARD/USCGC MIDGETT

The crew of the Coast Guard cutter *Midgett* lays out a fuel hose in preparation for a helicopter in-flight refueling operation with an Air Station Barbers Point MH-65 Dolphin helicopter off Oahu on March 26, 2020. The crew completed their first operation patrol in the Pacific at the end of April.

COAST GUARD/USCGC MIDGETT

The crew of the Coast Guard cutter *Midgett* prepares to launch their small boat with a boarding team to conduct law enforcement boardings to ensure compliance with international fisheries regulations and counter illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing in the Pacific Ocean last April 23, 2020.

COAST GUARD/USCGC MIDGETT

The crew of the Coast Guard cutter *Midgett* conducts navigation training in the wardroom while underway in the Pacific last April 10, 2020. The crew completed their first operation patrol in the Pacific at the end of April, ensuring U.S. presence to assure U.S. sovereignty and resource security in remote Pacific regions.

COAST GUARD/USCGC MIDGETT

The landing signal officer on the Coast Guard cutter *Midgett* gives direction to an Air Station Barbers Point MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew while operating in the Pacific Ocean on April 10, 2020. The crews are required to maintain competencies to embark and refuel helicopters.

RELIEF DISTRIBUTION

KRIZEL TUAZON

The Rotary Club of Saipan held a relief goods distribution using a drive-thru system last Friday at the San Jose pavilion that benefited about 200 individuals. Each beneficiary got a 5-lb bag of rice, noodles, chips, propane gas, and a hat. The club had a pre-drawn list of beneficiaries after reaching out to several individuals, mostly foreign workers who've lost their jobs or do not have a source of income during this time.

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
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EDITORIAL

The right way to reopen

With more than 60,000 Americans dead, 25 million out of a job, and the economy nearing outright collapse thanks to the coronavirus, it's understandable that governors nationwide are itching to lift lockdown restrictions and get everyone back to work. Regrettably, doing so is still premature.

Although any reopening will rightly unfold in phases, three essential steps are needed before anything like normal economic activity can resume. All three require the kind of federal leadership that has so far been absent.

The most important step is to ramp up coronavirus testing. Without adequate screening, it's impossible to know who's been infected, who's vulnerable and how widely the virus has spread. Until such data can be reliably collected, it won't be possible to replace lockdowns with a reliable containment strategy, in which those who contract the virus—and their close contacts—can be quarantined.

Screening everyone with COVID-19 symptoms or exposure will require a substantial increase in testing capacity, widespread use of rapid diagnostics and intricate coordination. By one estimate, the U.S. would need to administer some 5 million tests a day to safely resume social activities, compared with a current capacity of about 300,000 a day. A national strategy is essential for a project of that scale.

Unfortunately, the White House has abdicated this responsibility. Its plan to boost testing, released Monday, leaves all the hard work to the states and insists the federal government is merely the "supplier of last resort." A serious national testing strategy should instead prod laboratories to create better and faster screening, offer companies the financial and logistical support they need to produce more test kits, monitor cases to ensure that tests are distributed where they're most needed and make sure all 50 states are screening adequately and reporting their results.

A second challenge is equipment. Across the country, doctors and nurses still report a shortage of basic protective gear such as masks and gowns. States can't keep testing programs going without predictable supplies of materials like swabs and reagents. Getting the public to adhere to federal guidelines on face shielding would be a lot easier if more—and better—protective masks were easily available.

Such shortages are solvable, but they demand a fundamental rethink from the White House. So far, the Trump administration has been erratically invoking the Defense Production Act to harangue individual companies and labs into making the stuff it deems most important, with little attention to their capacity or competence for the job. This hasn't worked. It's exactly the wrong approach.

The government should instead offer purchase guarantees for essential equipment and promise to pay above-market rates (at least to start) to any company that can make the needed goods quickly and safely, while absorbing excess production into federal stockpiles. This would reduce uncertainty about future demand and incentivize companies to

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Coronavirus is the great unequalizer

By DOYLE MCMANUS
Los Angeles Times

Doyle McManus is a columnist for The Los Angeles Times. *Readers may send him email at doyle.mcmanus@latimes.com*

We live in an unequal society, and the coronavirus is making it worse.

The pandemic has struck disproportionately at poor people in cities, almost as if it were deliberately targeting minorities. In New York, the death rate among African Americans and Latinos has been roughly twice as high as among white people.

The economic impact has been unequal too. A survey released Tuesday by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation reported that more than half of the workers who have lost income because of the pandemic were already below the federal poverty line. Higher-income workers, by contrast, have mostly kept their jobs.

Now add a third, cruel form of inequality: unequal risk.

Knowledge workers who can work at home are riding out the pandemic in relative safety. First responders, health care workers, bus drivers, grocery store clerks and delivery workers don't have that luxury.

To keep their paychecks coming, they have to go out in public and risk infection—even though they generally aren't as well paid as the managers (and journalists) who work at home.

Those are the new facts of American inequality. They'll persist as long as the coronavirus is at large. The economic impact is likely to continue even longer.

"We had a lot of inequality before the pandemic, and we're going to have a lot more before it's over," Isabel V. Sawhill of the Brookings Institution, a leading scholar on poverty and class, told me. "It's quite scary to think about what will become of the country when the effects are so uneven."

The question is: What do we do about it?

Will this be a moment for Americans to take a searching look at our society's inequalities, and decide to raise the incomes of the working poor?

Or will we choose to muddle through the Pandemic Recession and try to forget everything we're suddenly seeing in stark relief?

So far, federal and state governments have been in crisis mode, scrambling to quell the pandemic and halt the economy's free fall.

Congress has passed four economic relief bills with more than $3 trillion in emergency spending, an emergency effort of unprecedented size.

But the measures have been short term and top-down. They began with bailouts for airlines and other big businesses, then added a massive program of loans for small businesses, direct payments to taxpayers and expanded unemployment benefits.

Meanwhile, the Federal Reserve has buoyed the stock markets by lending trillions to banks, businesses, states and counties.

The rollout has been plagued with more than its share of problems.

The small-business loan program started in chaos, and funneled much of its money to big businesses instead. The second round, which began Monday, led to widespread frustration as the Small Business Administration's website repeatedly crashed and bankers couldn't file applications for clients.

States have been swamped by applications for unemployment insurance; Florida reported last week that it had managed to approve only 20% of incoming requests.

President Donald Trump hopes for a sharp economic recovery before the November election. But the International Monetary Fund warns the recession could last more than a year. The bounce-back could stall if the pandemic recurs or if wary consumers stay away from public places and continue to trim their spending.

So we need to plan for a longer ordeal.

Sawhill says that means more spending on the Paycheck Protection Program, which is intended to help small businesses, and extended unemployment insurance plus more help for state and local governments.

But the relief packages need several new elements to soften the pandemic's impact on the no-longer-working poor.

"It's going to be horrible for low-income families," Sawhill told me. "The jobs that are hardest hit tend to be low-paid, including retail, food and restaurants. Those are often jobs held by women. I worry about low-income single parents. They're mostly women, they have virtually no financial reserves, and they often have no other adult to rely on."

She recommends expanding the low-income safety net with emergency funding for food stamps and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, two programs that got similar boosts during the Great Recession a decade ago.

But Congress needs to put automatic triggers on all these programs, so that funding rises along with job losses. That way, the newly unemployed won't have to depend on Congress voting for round after round of new funding amid the polarized debates of

See CORONAVIRUS on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Financial POAs: 10 key provisions that are commonly overlooked

FINE PRINT

By JORDAN SUNDELL
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jordan Sundell is a lawyer primarily practicing business, real estate, estate-planning, and asset-protection law. He formerly worked for the CNMI Supreme Court and Bridge Capital and is now general counsel for several real-estate companies, including JZ Group. His columns—focused mainly on real estate, small business, and estate planning—are published every other Tuesday. Be sure to like the Fine Print on Facebook!

We all need several estate-planning documents. One of the essential few is a financial power of attorney (also known as a durable general power of attorney). This document empowers a trusted agent to step in and handle our financial affairs if we become disabled, incapacitated, or incompetent. Without it, your family would need to file a legal action seeking approval from the court to act as your guardian or conservator—a slow and expensive process at a time when speed is important.

But while having a financial POA can be invaluable, it's only as good as the words contained within it. Unfortunately, many standard POAs are not comprehensive, leading them to omit useful provisions. Here's 10 of the more commonly overlooked ones.

First, if you are incapacitated for any length of time, it's likely that your agent will need to interact with the tax man, either in the form of signing a tax return or something more involved. To make sure that your agent will be able to do that, your financial POA should have a clause empowering your agent to handle tax matters and speak to tax authorities on your behalf.

Second, many people have the lion's share of their assets in investment or retirement accounts. Because of the money at stake, account administrators and retirement plan custodians are understandably cautious. They'll want to see specific authorization before giving your agent access. So, your financial POA should spell out what your agent can see and do.

Third, an important tax strategy for wealthier individuals is to make regular gifts to heirs. If done right, these gifts reduce your taxable estate when you pass away, meaning that more of your money goes to heirs and less of it goes to the government. So, if you are considering a gift-giving tax strategy, your financial POA should say that your agent can start or continue giving gifts consistent with that strategy.

Fourth, if you are incapacitated for an extended period, it can be helpful to give your agent the power to create or amend trusts for your benefit. Allowing your agent this authority maximizes flexibility when executing your estate plan. And it can come in handy if you don't have a will because while you can give your agent the authority to create or change a trust, you can't give them the power to make a will for you.

Fifth, more and more of us will need long-term care (extended assistance with medical needs or daily activities, whether provided at home, via community services, or at a nursing facility). It's important to authorize your agent to make decisions about where and what kind of care you'll receive.

Sixth, as touched on a moment ago, many of us will need extended care. Frequently a family member will provide that care at your home or theirs. They can do so for free, of course. But often it's better to pay them. If so, you will want your agent to have the authority to both hire and pay them.

Seventh, as we get older, poorer, or both, we qualify for an increasing number of government benefits. But sometimes government agencies can be persnickety about whether an agent can do so on your behalf. To sidestep the problem, make sure that your financial POA grants your agent the power to apply for public benefits on your behalf.

Eighth, a financial POA involves your agent providing a service, whether it's managing your finances, speaking with the government, hiring attorneys and accountants, and so on. In a real sense, it's a job. But frequently the agent is a family member. And sometimes that means the expectation is that the agent will donate their time and effort. Whether that's the case or not should be discussed in advance and spelled out in your POA.

Ninth, like most legal documents, it's useful to explain how it will come to an end. So, a good financial POA should describe the mechanics for its termination.

Such a provision is especially helpful if you have a "springing" POA, which is a POA that restricts your agent's authority to times when you are incapacitated. For this kind of POA, it's particularly important to define when you've become incapacitated and, similarly, when your capacity has been restored. A common practice is to require a doctor's note or, sometimes, the opinion of two doctors.

Finally, your financial POA needs a last-in-time clause to address what happens if you have a preexisting POA. The clause should say that any POA executed prior to the current one is void. This eliminates the issue of how to handle dueling POAs, especially if an earlier POA authorizes an agent to do something and a later POA is silent on the same topic.

This column is for informational purposes only and is not intended to be taken as legal advice. For your specific case, consult a lawyer.

REOPEN

From Page 8

make the longer-term investments—such as retraining staff and retooling factories—needed to ramp up production. If designed as an auction, with higher prices for faster work, this approach would also encourage innovation, increase efficiency and significantly speed things up.

A final prerequisite is to develop a large-scale plan to trace the contacts of those who've been infected and encourage them to get tested and isolate themselves. This is hard enough for run-of-the-mill infectious diseases. A global pandemic poses immense challenges. For one thing, there are only some 2,200 professional contact tracers in the U.S.; experts estimate that 100,000 may be needed to fight the coronavirus.

If the Trump administration has a plan for expanding this capacity it has kept uncharacteristically quiet about it. As a start, the Department of Health and Human Services should stipulate how the government intends to help states hire and train tracers on a large scale, work with technology companies to coordinate this process nationally, and encourage widespread adoption of tracing apps—which, with privacy protections, should help inform policy makers, hasten the recovery and save lives. (Disclosure: Bloomberg Philanthropies is helping fund a tracing program in New York.) A prudent liability-protection plan for businesses will also be imperative.

Getting the economy back to "normal" is likely to be a long and painful process. But these initial efforts would help health authorities get a grip on the pandemic and lay the groundwork for more ambitious steps to come. All of it should've been done already. It isn't too late, even now, for the administration to show some leadership.

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CORONAVIRUS

From Page 8

an election year.

Want to think bigger?

Gene Sperling, a former economic adviser to Bill Clinton, is proposing a $20 "living wage" package that would begin with a $15 minimum wage and add child care subsidies and tax credits.

Other Democrats hope this will be the moment when voters coalesce around their demands for universal health insurance, so workers don't lose access to medical care if they lose their jobs.

Those proposals will remain stretches unless Democrats win a landslide in November.

But we ought to reach a bipartisan consensus that the "essential workers" we claim to admire as heroic—including grocery store clerks, delivery service drivers and meat packers—deserve a living wage.

They're risking their lives on our behalf. For their sake, it would be a terrible thing to let this crisis go to waste.

Dream: Reality Enigma Adenosine Triphosphate Meaning Sonnets

LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY 'PEPE BATBON' CONNOLLY
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka Pepe Batbon is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.

The Minimal Mess of Neutrino Nuttiness

A yin yang dream inspired by Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar's The Maximum Mass of Ideal White Dwarfs (1931)

Oh they were stars of deep seas and dark skies all right
tearing through supermarkets and small grocery stores
quietly moving past milk and corn cereal all day and night
in between pickled pigs feet, kale and chocolate smors
they were passing through trees pick up trucks and cans
through radios red lights raging rivers and cattle ranches
through desert sands mountains and food delivery vans
through Mississippi and Amazon delta tributary branches
galactic giant and dwarf stars of any color you might query
rolling through the universal cosmic radio background
entangling alliances over under and around string theory
incredible invisible inedible inaudible devoid of sound
and lets not forget white dwarfs red giants and black holes
half moon cookies star anise and cosmic cinnamon rolls.

A Big Bang Matter Day Collision

A 2020 Holy Saturday vision limeronnet on it

In our face in our world sadness and sorrow
coronavirus today still viral tomorrow
social distancing, booze and blues ways of coping
sunny sides of statistics keep us hoping
for happiness we beg make meals and borrow

catalytic the entropic two step and its companion
do a nuclear fusion waltz inside universal dominion
let there be countless stars inside galactic night
turn dark matter and dark energy into light
stars born out of chaos but without confusion
deep down inside our protective cranium
synaptic activity glowing like uranium
adenosine triphosphate gives us its energy
causing sadness and sorrow to depart and flee
starlight and sunlight our boon companion.

Thank God for Dreams

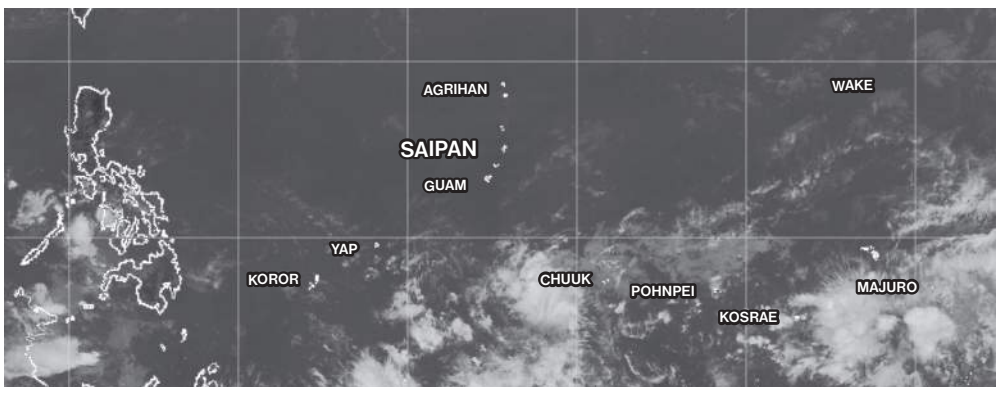
Thank God for giving us dreams
and when we have a nightmare
thank God for calming our screams
and waking us up to remember and share
praise angels for bringing amazing grace
when they see fit to bless our sleep
so when we wake up in the same old place
we count our blessings instead of sheep
these dreams bring night time close to death
when we wake up we are back to life
these dreams may continue until our last breath
some with joy and sorrow some mirth and strife
dreams good or bad, action overt and subdued
inside our dreamy heads its closure is pursued.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.
88° 77°	90° 78°	90° 78°	88° 78°	89° 78°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 6:45 AM, MONDAY, MAY 4, 2020

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Moderate trade winds, partly cloudy skies and isolated showers are found this morning across the Marianas. Satellite shows scattered trade-wind showers slipping by south of Guam, while other showers out to the southeast appear to be decreasing. Seas at the bouys range from 4 to 6 feet, with 3 to 4 ft wind wave at Ipan bouy.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

FLIGHT SCHEDULE

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				**GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN**			
UA117	9:15am	9:55am	1, 4, 6	UA174	7:30am	8:11am	1, 4, 6

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

MICRONESIA	▲ ▼ °F	
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	89° / 79°
Palau	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 81°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	84° / 79°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	84° / 79°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°

AROUND THE GLOBE	▲ ▼ °F	
Auckland	Windy	61° / 54°
Beijing	Partly Cloudy	81° / 54°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	84° / 77°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	83° / 71°
London	Partly Cloudy	57° / 45°
Los Angeles	Sunny	86° / 64°
Manila	Mostly Sunny	97° / 82°
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	63° / 48°
Miami	Sunny	84° / 73°
New York	Showers	68° / 46°
Osaka	Cloudy	68° / 57°
Paris	Partly Cloudy	73° / 55°
Busan	Rain	61° / 52°
Rome	Partly Cloudy	70° / 48°
Salem	Sunny	74° / 49°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	59° / 51°
Seoul	Thunderstorms	61° / 46°
Tokyo	Cloudy	59° / 54°
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	57° / 41°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	5:51 AM	6:35 PM
Wednesday	5:51 AM	6:35 PM
Thursday	5:51 AM	6:36 PM
Friday	5:50 AM	6:36 PM
Saturday	5:50 AM	6:36 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	3:58 AM	4:25 PM
Wednesday	-	4:44 AM	5:26 PM
Thursday	-	5:31 AM	6:27 PM
Friday	-	6:21 AM	7:30 PM
Saturday	-	7:13 AM	8:33 PM

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY	FEET	
5:49 AM	HIGH TIDE	2.12
12:16 PM	LOW TIDE	0.48
6:12 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.95
-	-	-

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:
- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

GOVERNMENT RESOURCE LISTING AS OF APRIL 16, 2020

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
- ***Cashier & Customer Service***
  Monday - Friday
  8:00 AM - 1:00 PM
  Tel: (670) 664-4282
  Pay bills online at www.cucgov.org or via phone by calling toll free 1-(855)-729-2282

Department of Finance
- ***Division of Revenue & Taxation***
  CASHIER ONLY
  Monday - Friday
  7:30 AM - 4:30 PM
  Tel: (670) 664-1000
- ***Division of Customs Services***
  - ***Airport:*** OPEN DAILY
    8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
  - ***Seaport:*** Monday - Friday
    8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
  - ***Chalan Kanoa Post Office:***
    Monday - Friday 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM
    Saturday 7:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Department of Public Lands
- CASHIER ONLY
  Monday - Thursday
  9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
  Tel: (670) 234-3751/52/53/54

Saipan Zoning Office
- *Available via phone only*
  Monday - Thursday
  7:30 AM - 11:30 AM
  Tel: (670) 234-9661/2/3
  Email: yubert.alepuyo@zoning.gov.mp
  Call or email for more information

Department of Public Works
- ***Solid Waste Management Division***
  - ***Lower Base Transfer Station & Marpi Landfill***
    Open all week except Wednesday
    7:30 AM - 1:00 PM
    Tel: (670) 322-2745

CNMI State Medicaid Agency
- Eligibility staff via phone only
  Tuesday - Thursday from 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
  Tel: (670) 664-4880/4882
  Accepting applications and supporting documents via drop-box at Medicaid Office. Medicaid application & renewal/ redetermination forms must be original. Applications/forms available for pick up next to the drop-box or online at: www.medicaid.cnmi.mp

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
- *Available via phone or email only on Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays from*
  9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
  Tel: (670) 322-6537/38
  Email: maryann@ovrgov.net

Office of the Attorney General
- ***Civil & Criminal Divisions***
  Monday - Friday
  8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
  Tel: (670) 237-7500/7600

Office of the Public Defender
- Monday - Friday
  9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
  Tel: (670) 234-6503

SOCIAL DISTANCING TO BE IMPLEMENTED AT ALL OFFICES

GOVERNOR'S COVID-19 TASK FORCE HOTLINE TEL: (670) 287-0046
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COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

GOVERNMENT RESOURCE LISTING AS OF APRIL 16, 2020

Department of Community and Cultural Affairs

- ***Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)***
  Accepting Calls From Existing Customers Only
  Tel: (670) 287-1475
- ***Division of Youth Services (DYS) On-Call***
  Saipan: (670) 285-2780 / 287-2781 / 287-1773
  Tinian: (670) 287-3268
  Rota: (670) 287-2553
- ***Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)***
  For inquiries regarding parent eligibility requirements for CCDF Program:
  Tel: (670) 783-8571 / (670) 783-8572
  Email: dccajguerrero@gmail.com / ccdf.jrosario@gmail.com
- ***Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture (CCAC)***
  For Recovery Arts Grant Application Submissions. Grant Guidelines are available at http://www.cnmiartscouncil.org
  Tel.: (670) 287-4585
  Email: parkeryobei@gmail.com
- ***Historic Preservation Office (HPO)***
  For Processing of Federal 106 Consultations Call
  Tel: (670) 789-1986
  Email: rchong.cnmihpo@gmail.com
- ***Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP)***
  Benefit Pick Up: Monday - Friday
  8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

  Application Pick Up: Monday - Friday
  8:00 AM - 6:00 PM

  Application Submission:
  Anytime via Drop-Box

  Application Inquiries:
  Tel: (670) 237-2801/2802

  To download the NAP application and other forms go to dcca.gov.mp
  Email: support@cnminap.gov.mp

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Business

Battered global tourism industry makes reopening plans

Six months ago, the global tourism industry was celebrating a record year for travel. Now, it's decimated and facing a recovery that could take years.

Tourism Economics, a data and consulting firm, predicts global travel demand won't resume its normal pace until 2023.

When tourists do finally return, they will face a changed landscape that incorporates social distancing and other measures to calm residual fears over COVID-19, the disease that has so far killed more than 244,000 people worldwide and infected millions more.

"It takes time to shake fear from the hearts of people, not to mention the economy," said Mahmoud Hadhoud, founder of Egypt Knight Tours, who doesn't expect foreign tourists to start trickling back into Egypt until September.

Last week, Hilton, Marriott and Airbnb all announced enhanced cleaning procedures worldwide to ease travelers' minds. In Egypt, Hadhoud is removing cruises and hot air balloon rides from his packages and replacing them with tours of Egypt's vast western deserts, where travelers can keep their distance from one another.

At Universal Studios in Orlando, Florida, multiple teams are working on scenarios, including putting more space between riders on roller coasters, said John Sprouls, the resort's chief administrative officer, at a recent virtual event for tourism officials.

Wynn Resorts CEO Matt Maddox said his company may sanitize dice between users, put fewer seats at blackjack tables and idle slot machines between players at its casinos in Las Vegas, Boston and Macau.

Gary Thulander, managing director of Chatham Bars Inn, a 106-year-old resort on Cape Cod, said the resort is planning many changes when it reopens this summer, including checking in guests via cell phones, letting them opt out of room service and lengthening dining hours so fewer guests will be eating at the same time.

The road to recovery will be long and hard for the tourism industry. The United Nations World Tourism Organization predicts global tourist arrivals—or visits from tourists who come to their destinations and stay at least one night—will fall 30% this year from the record 1.5 billion in 2019. Airlines have grounded nearly two-thirds of their planes as passengers vanish. Cruise ships are docked; some won't sail again until November.

Millions of people who depend on tourism are laid off or furloughed. In the U.S. alone, an estimated 8 million tourism-related workers are jobless right now, or about one-third of total U.S. unemployment, said Roger Dow, the president and CEO of the U.S. Travel Association.

Alexandre de Juniac, CEO of the International Air Transport Association, the leading airline trade group, said carriers need to fill at least 70% of seats to break even on most flights. If they're required to block or remove many seats, they will either stop flying or raise prices 50%, he said.

That will delay recovery for places like Israel, which sees almost all of its tourists arrive by air. Diklah Cohen Sheinfeld, chief of staff of the Israeli Tourism Ministry's director general's office, said the tourism industry—which employs 250,000 Israelis—was the first to be impacted and will likely be the last to recover.

"There are no tourists and no entry to the country for tourists. The gates are totally closed," she said.

In some places, governments are stepping in to help the sector. Serge Cachan, president of the Astotel hotel chain in Paris, closed his 17 properties in March and expects to lose 70% of his business this year. But the French government will help the chain get through it, he said. The government is paying around 80% of furloughed hotel workers' salaries.

To help limit the spread of coronavirus, please adhere to social distancing recommendations and stay at least 6 feet away from others.
WELCOME
Fabulous
LAS VEGAS
NEVADA

AP

In this March 21, 2020 file photo, a sign advises people to practice social distancing to slow the spread of the coronavirus at the "Welcome to Fabulous Las Vegas Nevada" sign amid a shutdown of casinos along the Las Vegas Strip in Las Vegas.

Faced with 20,000 dead, care homes seek shield from lawsuits

NEW YORK (AP)—Faced with 20,000 coronavirus deaths and counting, the nation's nursing homes are pushing back against a potential flood of lawsuits with a sweeping lobbying effort to get states to grant them emergency protection from claims of inadequate care.

At least 15 states have enacted laws or governors' orders that explicitly or apparently provide nursing homes and long-term care facilities some protection from lawsuits arising from the crisis. And in the case of New York, which leads the nation in deaths in such facilities, a lobbying group wrote the first draft of a measure that apparently makes it the only state with specific protection from both civil lawsuits and criminal prosecution.

Now the industry is forging ahead with a campaign to get other states on board with a simple argument: This was an unprecedented crisis and nursing homes should not be liable for events beyond their control, such as shortages of protective equipment and testing, shifting directives from authorities, and sicknesses that have decimated staffs.

"As our care providers make these difficult decisions, they need to know they will not be prosecuted or persecuted," read a letter sent this month from several major hospital and nursing home groups to their next big goal, California, where Gov. Gavin Newsom has yet to make a decision. Other states in their sights include Florida, Pennsylvania and Missouri.

Watchdogs, patient advocates and lawyers argue that immunity orders are misguided. At a time when the crisis is laying bare such chronic industry problems as staffing shortages and poor infection control, they say legal liability is the last safety net to keep facilities accountable.

They also contend nursing homes are taking advantage of the crisis to protect their bottom lines. Almost 70% of the nation's more than 15,000 nursing homes are run by for-profit companies, and hundreds have been bought and sold in recent years by private-equity firms.

"What you're really looking at is an industry that always wanted immunity and now has the opportunity to ask for it under the cloak of saying, 'Let's protect our heroes,'" said Mike Dark, an attorney for California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform.

In a time of COVID-19, 'Obamacare' still part of the action

WASHINGTON (AP)—COVID-19 could have stamped a person "uninsurable" if not for the Affordable Care Act. The ban on insurers using preexisting conditions to deny coverage is a key part of the Obama-era law that the Trump administration still seeks to overturn.

Without the law, people who recovered from COVID-19 and tried to purchase an individual health insurance policy could be turned down, charged higher premiums or have follow-up care excluded from coverage. Those considered vulnerable because of conditions such as respiratory problems or early-stage diabetes would have run into a wall of insurer suspicion.

Yet as defenders of the ACA submit written arguments to the Supreme Court next week countering the latest challenge to its existence, the Trump administration remains adamant that former President Barack Obama's health law, known as "Obamacare," must go.

"A global pandemic does not change what Americans know: Obamacare has been an unlawful failure and further illustrates the need to focus on patient care," White House spokesman Judd Deere said in a statement.

Deere asserted that the law limits patient choice, has premiums that are too expensive and restricts patients with high-risk conditions from going to the doctors and hospitals they need. Trump has said he would protect people with preexisting conditions, as have other Republicans, but he hasn't spelled out a plan.

Some GOP lawmakers in contested races this fall are unnerved by the prospect of Trump administration lawyers asking the Supreme Court during the coronavirus outbreak to toss out a law that provides coverage to at least 20 million Americans.

"The ACA remains the law of the land, and it is the Department of Justice's duty to defend it," said Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine. "That is especially true during the current public health crisis our country is facing due to COVID-19."

She is among those urging the administration not to get rid of the law but instead make broader use of it to cover uninsured people during the pandemic. Collins is considered among the most endangered incumbents as Republicans try to keep their Senate majority.

It's unclear whether the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments before the November election. A group of GOP-led states contends that because Congress repealed an ACA tax penalty, the law's requirement for individuals to carry health insurance is unconstitutional. If the insurance mandate is unconstitutional, their argument goes, then the rest of the law must collapse like a house of cards.

The administration agrees, but has also suggested that federal judges could decide to keep some parts of the law. The Supreme Court took the case after a federal appeals court in New Orleans said the ACA's insurance mandate is unconstitutional, but did not rule on the rest of the law.

From nearly 12 million people to 35 million could lose their workplace coverage due to layoffs in the coronavirus shutdown, according to an estimate by the consulting firm Health Management Associates. They have more options because of the Obama-era law.

They are entitled to a special sign-up opportunity for coverage through HealthCare.gov or their state insurance market, and may qualify for financial assistance with premiums and other costs. They cannot be asked about health problems. In states that expanded Medicaid, some may qualify for that program, usually at little or no cost.

Nation

In televised town hall, Trump pushes for economic reopening

AP
President Donald Trump speaks during a Fox News virtual town hall from the Lincoln Memorial, Sunday, May 3, 2020, in Washington.

WASHINGTON (AP)—Anxious to spur an economic recovery without risking lives, President Donald Trump on Sunday insisted that "you can satisfy both"—see states gradually lift lockdowns while also protecting people from the coronavirus pandemic that has killed more than 60,000 Americans.

The president, fielding questions from Americans in a virtual town hall from the Lincoln Memorial, acknowledged valid fears on both sides of the issue. Some people are worried about getting sick; others are reeling from lost jobs and livelihoods.

But while Trump increased his projection for the total U.S. death total to 80,000 or 90,000—up by more than 20,000 fatalities from what he had suggested just a few weeks ago—he struck a note of urgency to restart the nation's economy, declaring "we have to reopen our country."

"We have to get it back open safely but as quickly as possible," Trump said.

After more than a month of being cooped up at the White House, Trump returned from a weekend at the Camp David presidential retreat in Maryland for the virtual town hall hosted by Fox News Channel.

The president said of his monumental backdrop: "We never had a more beautiful set than this."

As concerns mount about his reelection bid, Trump stuck to his relentlessly optimistic view of the nation's ability to rebound soon.

"It is all working out," Trump said. "It is horrible to go through, but it is working out."

Many public health experts believe the nation cannot safely reopen fully until a vaccine is developed. Trump declared Sunday that he believed one could be available by year's end.

U.S. public health officials have said a vaccine is probably a year to 18 months away. But Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's leading expert on infectious diseases and member of the White House coronavirus task force, said in late April that it is conceivable, if a vaccine is soon developed, that it could be in wide distribution as early as January.

Though the administration's handling of the pandemic, particularly its ability to conduct widespread testing, has come under fierce scrutiny, the president tried to shift the blame to China and said the U.S. was ready to begin reopening.

"I'll tell you one thing. We did the right thing and I really believe we saved a million and a half lives," the president said.

But he also broke with the assessment of his senior adviser and son-in-law, Jared Kushner, saying it was "too soon to say" the federal government had overseen a "success story."

Trump's impatience also flashed. While noting that states would go at their own pace in returning to normal, with ones harder hit by the coronavirus going slower, he said that "some states, frankly, I think aren't going fast enough." He singled out Virginia, which has a Democratic governor and legislature. And he urged the nation's schools and universities to return to classes this fall.

Federal guidelines that encouraged people to stay at home and practice social distancing expired late last week.

Debate continued over moves by governors to start reopening state economies that tanked after shopping malls, salons and other nonessential businesses were ordered closed in attempt to slow a virus that has killed more than 66,000 Americans, according to a tally of reported deaths by Johns Hopkins University.

The U.S. economy has suffered, shrinking at a 4.8% annual rate from January through March, the government estimated last week. And roughly 30.3 million people have filed for unemployment aid in the six weeks since the outbreak forced employers to shut down and slash their workforces.

Violent arrest raises concerns about NYPD distancing patrols

NEW YORK (AP)—A New York City police officer who was caught on video Saturday pointing a stun gun at a man and violently taking him to the ground over an alleged social distancing violation has been stripped of his gun and badge and placed on desk duty pending an internal investigation.

Bystander video showed the plainclothes officer, who was not wearing a protective face mask, slapping 33-year-old Donni Wright in the face, punching him in the shoulder and dragging him to a sidewalk after leveling him in a crosswalk in Manhattan's East Village.

"The behavior I saw in that video is simply not acceptable," Mayor Bill de Blasio tweeted Sunday. He said earlier in the day that there will be a careful look into what happened.

Police spokeswoman Sgt. Mary Frances O'Donnell said Wright "took a fighting stance against the officer" when he was ordered to disperse and was arrested on charges including assault on a police officer and resisting arrest.

The charges have been deferred pending further investigation, a Manhattan District Attorney's Office spokesperson said.

A message seeking comment was left with the police officers union.

Wright's arrest and that of two other people minutes earlier on the same block across from a public housing complex raised new questions about the police department's use of force, the role of officers in enforcing social distancing measures and inconsistency in how they're applied.

The manner of Wright's arrest appeared to echo that of 20-year-old Fitzroy Gayle, who was seen on bystander video pleading for help as several officers wrestled him into submission on a Brooklyn sidewalk in early March.

Jennvine Wong, a lawyer with the Legal Aid Society's Cop Accountability Project, said footage of the arrests Saturday stood in sharp contrast to photos and video—including some tweeted out by the police department—showing officers in crowded city parks handing out face masks and gently reminding people to stay 6 feet apart.

"This certainly isn't the first time and this isn't even the first time in this pandemic that we've seen evidence of discriminatory policing by the NYPD," Wong said.

Carolyn Martinez-Class, of the police watchdog Communities United for Police Reform, said: "This incident illustrates why public health professions and community partners should be responsible for social distancing education and creating norms—not police."

The police department assigned 1,000 officers to social distancing patrols over the weekend as temperatures reached the high 70s (about 25 degrees Celsius). On Saturday, they issued 51 summonses, including 43 in city parks. At a news conference Sunday, Shea said he was aware of just three arrests.

Governor: Face covering order 'went too far,' was reversed

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP)—An order for people to wear face coverings while in stores was reversed last week because it "went too far," Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine said Sunday.

DeWine reversed the order Tuesday, saying many Ohioans saw it as "one government mandate too far" and saying face coverings were strongly recommended but would no longer be required. He repeated that sentiment Sunday on ABC's "This Week," calling it "a bridge too far" and saying, "People were not going to accept the government telling them what to do."

"So my ability to communicate to the people of Ohio, frankly, I thought, was going to be really impeded and we would get hung up on the mandatory masks for someone going in as a customer and it just wasn't going to work," he said. "And so you got to know what you can do and what you can't do."

On Friday, the Republican governor extended the state shutdown until May 29 while also allowing retail stores to expand their business earlier than expected. He spoke as Ohio COVID-19 deaths topped 1,000 for the first time and as dozens of protesters of Ohio's stay-at-home orders returned to the statehouse.

Construction companies, distributors, manufacturers and offices are allowed to reopen Monday, and retail businesses on May 12. Health care offices were allowed to reopen Friday. Bars and movie theaters remain closed, along with in-person dining at restaurants. Sporting events and concerts are still prohibited.

The governor said reopening Ohio is a "balancing" act between bringing the economy back while protecting people and added that he will be prepared to take action should the situation worsen again.

The governor earlier said multiple working groups were being formed to come up with the best and safest way to restart activities, including hair care, dining out, going to the gym, visiting libraries and participating in sporting events.

"So when we open tomorrow in regard to a lot of businesses as well as office, it's going to be based upon really best practices that were laid out by people in those businesses who do that," he said Sunday.

Here are the latest coronavirus developments in Ohio:

CASES

Ohio state health officials say the number of confirmed and probable deaths associated with the coronavirus has now reached 1,038.

The Ohio health department posted figures Sunday indicating 957 confirmed deaths and another 81 probable deaths associated with the virus.

The department noted more than 19,000 confirmed cases of the virus and a probable total of more than 19,900.

For most people, the virus causes mild or moderate symptoms that clear up in a couple of weeks. Older adults and people with existing health problems are at higher risk of more severe illness, including pneumonia, or death.

Asia

South Korea: Kim did not have surgery amid lingering rumors

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korean leader Kim Jong Un did not undergo surgery or any other medical procedure, a South Korean official said Sunday, amid speculation about his health that continues to linger even after he reappeared publicly in recent days.

North Korea had said Saturday that Kim attended the completion of a fertilizer factory near Pyongyang on Friday, in his first public appearance in about 20 days.

While North Korean video showing a smiling Kim moving around, cutting a red ribbon and smoking quelled intense rumors that he might be gravely ill or even have died, some media outlets and observers still raised questions about his health, citing moments when his walking looked a bit stiff at the factory.

A senior South Korean presidential official told reporters Sunday that the government had determined that Kim did not have surgery or any other procedure, according to the presidential Blue House. The official, whose name wasn't disclosed by the Blue House, refused to provide the basis for the intelligence assessment.

South Korea has a spotty record in confirming developments in North Korea, one of the world's most secretive countries. But when rumors about Kim's health surfaced in recent weeks, the South Korean government steadfastly dismissed them as baseless and maintained there were no unusual activities in the North.

AP

In this Friday, May 1, 2020, photo provided by the North Korean government, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, center, visits a fertilizer factory in Sunchon, South Pyongan province, near Pyongyang, North Korea.

It wasn't the first time Kim had disappeared from public view for an extended period. In 2014, when he reappeared after a six-week absence, he walked with a cane and used an electric cart. The North Korea-provided footage on Saturday showed Kim riding an electric cart similar to the one he used in 2014, when he was reported to have an ankle injury.

Kim, 36, is the third generation of his family to govern North Korea with an iron fist that tolerates no dissent. He hasn't publicly anointed his successor, and rumors about his health triggered worries about the North's political stability and its nuclear program.

In 2018, Kim entered talks with President Donald Trump on the fate of his nuclear arsenal, but their diplomacy has been deadlocked in recent months. Trump tweeted Saturday that "I, for one, am glad to see he is back, and well!"

Rohingya refugees floating at sea land on Bangladesh island

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP)—At least 29 Rohingya refugees from a fishing boat floating for weeks in the Bay of Bengal have landed on an island in southern Bangladesh, officials said Sunday.

The refugees, including 15 women and six children, landed on Bhasan Char island on Saturday and are believed to be from one of several boats stuck at sea, said Tonmoy Das, the chief local government official in Noakhali district.

Das said food, doctors and a team of 10 policemen were sent to the island to take care of the refugees.

An official from Bangladesh's Refugee Commissioner's office in Cox's Bazar district said the office was aware of the development. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

Rights groups said recently that hundreds of Rohingya are stranded on at least two fishing trawlers between Bangladesh and Malaysia. The refugees reportedly attempted to illegally reach Malaysia, but failed because of strict patrols to keep out the coronavirus.

The United Nations, the British government and Human Rights Watch have recently urged Bangladesh to shelter all the refugees floating at sea, but the government had a lukewarm response, saying all other nations in the Bay of Bengal region should also share the responsibility of sheltering them.

Bhasan Char was previously submerged by monsoon rains but Bangladesh's government said in January that it was ready to house up to 100,000 Rohingya refugees from the crowded and squalid camps where they've lived for years in Cox's Bazar.

Bangladesh's navy was involved with a multimillion-dollar project under which flood protection embankments, houses, hospitals and mosques have been built on the island.

But no refugees have agreed so far to move to the island, and the U.N. and other international agencies did not show much optimism about the relocation to the newly built island.

The U.N.'s refugee agency said Sunday that it was concerned about the refugees.

"The U.N.'s longstanding position is that comprehensive technical and protection assessments to evaluate the safety and sustainability of life on Bhasan Char are essential before any relocations to the island take place. The U.N. has long been prepared to proceed with onsite assessment work," Louise Donovan, a spokeswoman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, or UNHCR, said in an email.

More than 700,000 Rohingya Muslims came to Bangladesh starting in August 2017, when the military in Buddhist-majority Myanmar began a harsh crackdown against them in response to an attack by insurgents. Global rights groups and the U.N. have called the campaign ethnic cleansing involving rapes, killings and torching of thousands of homes. Currently more than 1 million Rohingya live in Bangladesh.

World

AS LOCKDOWNS EASE

Some nations report new infection peaks

ROME (AP)—While millions of people took advantage of easing coronavirus lockdowns to enjoy the outdoors, some of the world's most populous countries reported worrisome new peaks in infections Sunday, including India, which saw its biggest single-day jump yet.

Second in population only to China, India reported more than 2,600 new infections. In Russia, new cases exceeded 10,000 for the first time. The confirmed total death toll in Britain climbed near that of Italy, the epicenter of Europe's outbreak, even though the U.K. population is younger than Italy's and Britain had more time to prepare.

The United States continues to see tens of thousands of new infections each day, with more than 1,400 additional deaths reported Saturday.

Health experts have warned of a potential second wave of infections unless testing is expanded dramatically once the lockdowns are relaxed. But pressure to reopen keeps building after the weekslong shutdown of businesses plunged the global economy into its deepest slump since the 1930s and wiped out millions of jobs.

At a virtual town hall Sunday night, President Donald Trump acknowledged some Americans are worried about getting sick while others are concerned about losing jobs.

Though the administration's handling of the pandemic, particularly the ability to conduct widespread testing, has come under criticism, the president defended the response and said the nation was ready to begin reopening.

"We have to get it back open safely but as quickly as possible," Trump said.

China, which reported only two new cases, saw a surge in visitors to tourist spots newly reopened ahead of a five-day holiday that runs through Tuesday. Nearly 1.7 million people visited Beijing parks on the first two days of the holiday, and Shanghai's main tourist spots welcomed more than 1 million visitors, according to Chinese media. Many spots limited daily visitors to 30% of capacity.

On the eve of Italy's first steps toward easing restrictions, the Health Ministry reported 174 deaths in the 24-hour period ending Sunday evening—the lowest day-to-day number since the national lockdown began on March 10. Parks and public gardens were set to reopen on Monday.

In Britain, Prime Minister Boris Johnson is under pressure to reveal how the country will lift its lockdown. The restrictions are due to last through Thursday, but with hundreds of deaths still being reported daily, it's unclear how the country can safely loosen the restrictions.

The 55-year-old Johnson, who spent three nights in intensive care while being treated for COVID-19, told The Sun newspaper that he knew his doctors were preparing for the worst.

"It was a tough old moment, I won't deny it," he said. "They had a strategy to deal with a 'death of Stalin'-type scenario" if he succumbed to the virus.

IS extremists step up as Iraq, Syria, grapple with virus

BAGHDAD (AP)—The man wearing an explosive vest emerged from a car and calmly marched toward the gates of the intelligence building in Iraq's northern city of Kirkuk. When he ignored their shouts to halt, guards opened fire, and he blew himself up, wounding three security personnel in the first week of Ramadan.

Days later, a three-pronged coordinated attack killed 10 Iraqi militia fighters in the northern province of Salahaddin—the deadliest and most complex operation in many months.

The assaults are the latest in a resurgence of attacks by the Islamic State group in northern Iraq. The first was a brazen suicide mission not seen in months. The second was among the most complex attacks since the group's defeat in 2017. In neighboring Syria, IS attacks on security forces, oil fields and civilian sites have also intensified.

The renewed mayhem is a sign that the militant group is taking advantage of governments absorbed in tackling the coronavirus pandemic and the ensuing slide into economic chaos. The virus is compounding longtime concerns among security and U.N. experts that the group would stage a comeback after its "caliphate," which once encompassed a third of Iraq and Syria, was brought down last year.

In Iraq, militants also exploit security gaps at a time of an ongoing territorial dispute and a U.S. troop drawdown.

"It's a real threat," said Qubad Talabani, deputy prime minister of the northern Kurdish region of Iraq. "They are mobilizing and killing us in the north and they will start hitting Baghdad soon." He said IS was benefiting from a "gap" between Kurdish forces and federal armed forces caused by political infighting.

Intelligence reports say the number of IS fighters in Iraq is believed to be 2,500-3,000.

In northeast Syria, Kurdish-dominated police have become a more visible target for IS as they patrol the streets to implement anti-virus measures, said Mervan Qamishlo, a spokesman for U.S.-allied Kurdish-led forces.

IS fighters in late March launched a campaign of attacks in government-held parts of Syria, from the central province of Homs all the way to Deir el-Zour to the east, bordering Iraq.

Some 500 fighters, including some who had escaped from prison, recently slipped from Syria into Iraq, helping fuel the surge in violence there, Iraqi intelligence officials said.

IS is shifting from local intimidation to more complex attacks, three Iraqi military officials and experts said. Operations previously focused on assassinations of local officials and less sophisticated attacks. Now the group is carrying out more IED attacks, shootings and ambushes of police and military. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media.

Overdrive

AUTO REVIEW:

Affordable **Nissan Sentra** makes your pulse accelerate, until you hit the gas pedal

TNS

The 2020 Nissan Sentra.

NUTS & BOLTS

2020 Nissan Sentra

- **Vehicle type**: Front-engine, front-wheel drive, 5-passenger sedan
- **Price**: $20,015, including $925 destination charge ($25,325 SR Premium model as tested)
- **Powerplant**: 2.0-liter four-cylinder
- **Power**: 149 horsepower, 146 pound-feet of torque
- **Transmission**: CVT
- **Performance**: 0-60 mph, 9.2 seconds (Car and Driver)
- **Weight**: 3,084 pounds as tested
- **Fuel economy**: EPA 28 city/ 37 highway/ 32 combined (SR as tested)
- **Report card**
- **Highs**: Hot looks; bargain price
- **Lows**: Needs more power, oh, that CVT drone
- **Overall**: 3 stars

By HENRY PAYNE
THE DETROIT NEWS

COVID-19 times are lean times. Toilet paper is priceless. Attorneys general are on the lookout for price-gouging.

They won't need to waste their time at the Nissan dealership.

The loaded all-new compact Nissan Sentra SR Premium that I tested is $25,325. I'm not making that up. That includes sunroof, 18-inch alloy wheels, chrome grille, LED everything, floating black roof. Heated six-way automatic seats, heated steering wheel, automatic box, leatherette seats, Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, adaptive cruise-control, blind-spot assist, automatic emergency-braking, stitched dash with Mercedes-style rotary air vents and tablet screen.

Just $25,000. I'm still not making this up.

I had the Sentra in my driveway next to a $63,000 2020 Audi S4 rocket ship. I couldn't believe these two cars were $38,000 apart. The Audi was flirting with the Sentra, it was so hot. Maybe because Hollywood starlet Brie Larson pilots a Sentra in its new ad campaign—but there's more to it than that.

The interior is so nice I don't know what it's doing in a mainstream compact. When Mercedes debuted its sexy new CLA sedan a few years back—the German luxury brand's first $30,000 entry-level sedan—we auto reviewers asked: Where are the savings? It didn't take us long to figure it out. The interior was subpar with ill-fitting panels and a tablet screen tacked to the dash.

Not the Sentra. The attention to detail here is remarkable, from the aforementioned orange stitching to the subtle carbon-fiber trim around the instrument display to the graceful dash lines that seamlessly cups the tablet screen. No gouging here, Attorney General Nessel.

Nissan has long been a value leader in automotive, but style? It's never been my first choice.

Sure, the Japanese brand has had its moments. I've been a Nissan Z sports car fan since it was called the Datsun 240Z. I was just a West Virginia boy in the early '70s when the Datsun hottie started showing up at the local autocrosses my father competed in. With a lusty shape modeled after the legendary Ferrari GTO and a growly, inline-six engine to match, I was entranced.

The 240Z eventually evolved into the equally sexy 1990 Nissan 300Z. And then there was the 2004 Maxima, Nissan's full-size sedan hot-rod that combined Cadillac good looks with V-6 voom.

But like Nicolas Cage's acting career, the Nissan highlights have been few and far between.

With buyers eyeballing boxy, utilitarian, subcompact crossovers, however, Nissan has turned the designers loose on its car lineup. If the midsize Altima doesn't flip your switch you need to get your switch checked, and the Sentra is better looking than the Altima. The purpose of this is not just to make pretty things, but because of the chance to hook entry-level buyers in a market abandoned by Detroit automakers.

The Mazda 3 is a $25,000 sculpted masterpiece that just beat out the $150,000 Porsche Taycan for World Car Design of the Year. The Mazda adds Michigan-friendly all-wheel drive to match the Subaru Impreza, which also has stepped up its style game. The always handsome Volkswagen Jetta has added value to its lineup with a new model that promises standard features just like Japanese automakers. Even Toyota's Corolla has become easy on the eyes.

And watch out for Hyundai's new Elantra. Though its spectacular Los Angeles debut was overshadowed by the coronavirus pandemic, the little Korean is a rolling wonder with more angles than a Frank Gehry building.

But the big dog in the compact segment is the Honda Civic. Honda's best-selling retail compact offers a dizzying array of models, not to mention important features like a configurable center console and sporty ride. The latter is courtesy of the entry-level car being designed with top-end performance badges like the Type R and Si in mind—hellions that will make you consider moving to Hell, Michigan, just so you have Michigan's best roads at your doorstep.

To compete with the Civic, the formerly homely Sentra had to rely on rental fleets to find sales. But with its new bod, the Sentra deserves a look at the dealer as well. It's so good looking it almost made me forget that the Sentra is not offered in hatchback form, my favorite dress for compact hatches.

If you're looking for a hatchback, the Civic Sport, Mazda 3 and VW Golf are where you should be shopping. But if sedans are your thing, the Sentra now is in the hunt for more reasons than just price.

Altitude reduces need for octane in fuel

Q: I want to ask a follow-up question regarding a recent column. I always use regular gas, except when I'm driving out West in high altitudes. If I'm driving through the mountains, I use premium for better performance. Am I just burning money? Is there a certain altitude at which it makes sense, for example above 7,000 feet?

A: At higher altitudes, the air is thinner so you can actually get by with a lower octane gasoline. For instance, regular grade fuel is 87 octane in Chicago, but 85 octane in Denver. Your car will adjust itself for any elevation.

Q: The service manual for my vehicle indicates that "...independent of the Maintenance Minder information, replace the brake fluid every 3 years." I have not found any technician or knowledgeable vehicle service person who can tell me why. At the dealer when they wanted to do this, I asked why in this age of advanced technology Honda wouldn't make oil capable of lasting more than three years. They did not answer but simply skipped this step.

My current auto mechanic said he would drain, clean the line and replace the brake fluid when he replaced the brakes. After 44,000 miles, this has not been necessary. Am I risking damaging something?

A: Brake fluid is not oil, but a glycol-based compound. It is hygroscopic (not hydroscopic). That means it attracts water. Water boils at a much lower temperature than brake fluid, which can cause brake fade. The water vaporizes, and, as you know, a gas can be compressed. That's not good in a hydraulic system. Additionally, water in the system can damage some components. You need not change it at exactly 1,095 days, but whenever it is convenient. Your next brake service should be fine.

Q: We recently bought a new 2020 Chevy Tahoe and it has a CD player; we were surprised it had one. There must be a few other vehicles out there with them. I bought a new Chevy Silverado in 2006, and it had a cassette player and a CD player. Music devices just keep changing.

A: If you have an unrelenting passion for the stuff on your CDs, that should be a decision maker when car shopping.

Q: Every morning, no matter what time of year, my neighbor runs his car before leaving for work. His driveway is right next to my house and the fumes are really bothering me. Is this really needed?

A: Absolutely not. Fumes in your house are totally unnecessary. Oh, you mean idling the vehicle? Absolutely not. It wastes fuel, pollutes the air and annoys neighbors. From the engine's standpoint, driving gently for the first couple miles is much better.

MOTORMOUTH

By BOB WEBER
Chicago Tribune

Bob Weber is a writer and mechanic who became an ASE-certified Master Automobile Technician in 1976. He maintains this status by seeking certification every five years. Weber's work appears in professional trade magazines and other consumer publications. His writing also appears in automotive trade publications, Consumer Guide and Consumers Digest. Send questions along with name and town to Motormouth, Rides, Chicago Tribune, 160 N. Stetson Ave., Fourth Floor, Chicago, IL 60601 or motormouth.tribune@gmail.com.

Q: I have a 2017 Hyundai Santa Fe with about 54,000 miles. Recently, the engine oil light has been coming on when the car is stopped at a red light. As soon as I accelerate the light goes off once the RPMs exceed 750. I have read it may be an oil pressure problem. Should I have the dealer check the engine? I don't want to damage it.

A: Yes, have an oil pressure test done as soon as possible. Although the problem may be as benign as a bad oil pressure switch, you should not take chances.

Life & Style

AP
This combination photo shows filmmaker Steven Spielberg, from left, and cast members from Spielberg's 1985 film "Goonies," Josh Brolin, second left, Sean Astin and Ke Huy Quan, who reunited with other cast and creators for a fundraiser for those affected by the pandemic. The reunion was hosted by actor Josh Gad.

'Goonies' cast, 'Flintstones' rescue TV viewers in pandemic

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Josh Gad had a notion about what might soothe the kid in him during a scary time and maybe do the same for others. The actor got to work organizing an online reunion of the cast and creators of the 1985 movie "The Goonies," which quickly tallied a million-plus views.

Gad's YouTube effort isn't alone in providing a screen version of comfort food for the housebound. With an uncertain future defined by coronavirus and its fallout, old movies, TV reruns and favorite characters offer a way to briefly swap current woes for familiar happy endings.

"It is the absolute right place, right time" to revisit "The Goonies," said Gad, the "Frozen" star who was a preschooler when he first saw the movie that left an indelible impression of joy. "I think nostalgia is so important right now because we all want to go back to simpler times. We all are hoping for something we can connect with that reminds of us better days."

"The Goonies" video, featuring cast members including Sean Astin, Josh Brolin, Ke Huy Quan and Kerri Green and producer Steven Spielberg, is raising money for those affected by the pandemic.

There are other COVID-19-related fundraising reunions, including a scripted one with the original "Parks and Recreation" cast airing at 8:30 p.m. EDT Thursday on NBC, and an online virtual get-together of "Melrose Place" cast members held earlier this week.

In "A Parks and Recreation Special," Amy Poehler's Leslie Knope refuses to let social distancing undermine her friendships, trusting in the "power of community to hold people together" and in government as a force for good, both timely themes, sitcom co-creator Mike Schur told a teleconference.

Networks are surveying the emotional climate and responding.

Throughout May, CBS is bringing back its Sunday movie showcase, a longtime fixture that ended nearly 14 years ago. "Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark" is the lead-off film, followed by "Forrest Gump"; "Mission: Impossible"; "Titanic" and "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" ("Titanic" airs 7-11 p.m. EDT, all others 8-11 p.m. Eastern).

To heighten the nostalgia, the network released a "CBS Sunday Night Movies" promotional spot done in an old-school style, as well as original trailers for the films.

"These are the new five big iconic films that we felt our audience would really enjoy," said Michael Benson, CBS president and chief marketing officer. The network had a bonanza to pick from: another reunion, the 2019 merger that brought CBS Corp. and Viacom back together, gave the network full access to Viacom's Paramount Pictures film library.

Asked why viewers who could choose to watch popular old movies on streaming or premium cable would tolerate a network's commercial breaks, Benson had a ready answer.

"The idea of a live communal event that you can actually talk about with your friends immediately after it happens" is the draw, he said, and less of an option with on-demand movies. CBS is using social media to build "excitement about what we're doing" and encourage viewers to arrange family or virtual viewing parties, Benson said.

The overall rise in viewing with people stuck at home has included a ratings boost for the MeTV channel, with "I Love Lucy," "The Dick Van Dyke Show" and "The Flintstones" on its slate of classic shows. According to Nielsen, the channel's prime-time viewership rose 5 percent from February to March.

ON THE NET

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-SF_VyXQpyo&t=1352s

Stars deliver inspirational messages in Call to Unite event

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Director Lee Daniels talked about past drug use and urged people not to give into the temptation to abuse drugs during the coronavirus pandemic, saying "You are not alone." Actress Eva Longoria said the pandemic is giving the world a chance to reset itself, and praised health workers for their huge sacrifices. LeAnn Rimes sang "There Will Be a Better Day."

The messages were both universal and personal on Saturday as the Call to Unite livestream, a 24-hour event, stretched into its second day.

President Bill Clinton and Oprah Winfrey were among those who participated Friday night, and Quincy Jones, Jennifer Garner, Common, Maria Shriver, Questlove, Yo-Yo Ma, were also participating in the event, being livestreamed at unite.us and on Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Twitch, LinkedIn and SiriusXM Stars.

Daniels, in an emotional message, talked about his past drug use during the AIDS epidemic in the '80s. He talked about the pain of losing friends to the disease, which he said decimated the African-American gay community. And he urged people not to resort to drug use during the current pandemic. "You're not alone," he said. "Stay in the moment. Don't use. Be safe."

Longoria cited the teachings of Gandhi as she urged people to "be the change you want to see in the world."

"We're in a moment where we have a chance to reset and start anew," she said. She praised nurses and doctors especially for risking their lives to save others, and therapists donating services to tend to people's mental health.

On Friday evening, Winfrey said she keeps updated with coronavirus news, but has often focused her attention more on positive "acts of valor."

The event, organized by Tim Shriver, was launched to help inspire people to endure and overcome the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic.

President George W. Bush said: "Even at an appropriate social distance, we can find ways to be present in the lives of others to ease their anxiety and share their burdens." Clinton delivered the message that "we can get through this together."

Churlish customers make life even more stressful for clerk

DEAR ABBY: I work in the deli department of a grocery store and have been struggling lately. With everything that is going on, people are overwhelmed and have been taking it out on us.

I asked one person, "How are you doing today?" The response I got was, "I'm not interested in conversation. Just feed me!" Another who came to the register didn't utter a single word except to exclaim, when I offered her a bottle opener for her soda, "I've got it!" Then she snatched her change out of my hand. I don't even get the brunt of it; the cashiers have to handle the worst of it.

We employees are stressed out about the same things everyone else is. We are struggling to get the same products everyone else is searching desperately for. I had to shop at five different stores to get what I need and still haven't found many things.

Between the stress of the virus and the stress of being treated so rudely, my mental health is running low. I have struggled on and off with depression and anxiety, and many of my coping methods are unavailable to me due to closures. Could you please remind your readers that we are all in the same boat and need to be kind to one another, and direct those of us who are struggling emotionally to resources we can access during this time of panic?

STRUGGLING IN RETAIL

DEAR STRUGGLING: I agree that many people react badly when under stress, as the customers you described have done. But many others respect and appreciate the efforts you and so many others in the food supply chain make every day —at some risk to your own health. I am one of them.

Because you have had issues with depression and anxiety in the past, consider contacting the therapist you worked with and ask if the person is doing online sessions. These days, many of them are. Just talking with someone—friends or like-minded co-workers—about what you are experiencing could bring some relief.

However, if that isn't possible, consider exploring whether there are online support groups for retail workers such as you. If there aren't, consider starting one so you and others can exchange ideas about coping with these extremely stressful circumstances in which we all find ourselves.

DEAR ABBY: My husband loves our cat too much. He buys "Miss Kitty" special treats, pets her, talks nicely to her, plants quick kisses on the top of her head and lets her sit on his lap while he watches TV for hours. It's like I'm nonexistent. I wish he would be that nice to me.

He's a good provider and, when we are away from the house, I have his full attention. I'm resenting this queen of our home. What should I do? I'd like to take her back to the animal shelter. It was my sorry idea to adopt her.

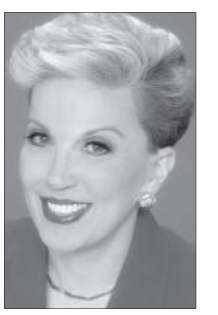
IN SECOND PLACE

DEAR SECOND PLACE: My first suggestion is to find reasons to spend more time with your husband away from the house. The second would be to adopt a dog. And if you do, make sure YOU are the one who feeds and walks it, unless your husband has such an affinity for pets that adopting another one isn't worth the risk.

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

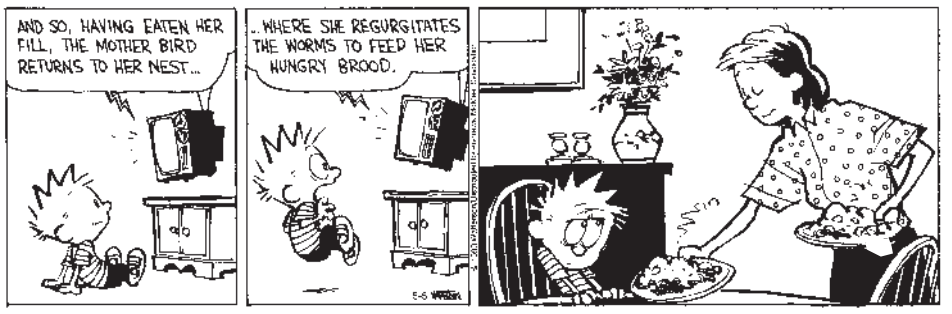


Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

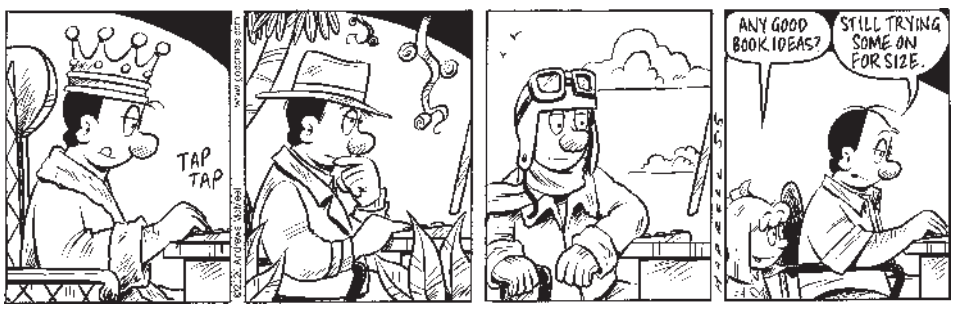

AND SO, HAVING EATEN HER FILL, THE MOTHER BIRD RETURNS TO HER NEST...
..WHERE SHE REGURGITATES THE WORMS TO FEED HER HUNGRY BROOD.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

HELLO? GOVERNOR'S OFFICE?
IS THE STATE STILL LOCKED DOWN BECAUSE OF THE VIRUS OR CAN I GO OUT AND RUN A MARATHON? I CAN'T? OKAY, BYE.
YOUR ABILITY TO EXPLOIT A PANDEMIC FOR YOUR OWN EGO IS COMMENDABLE.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

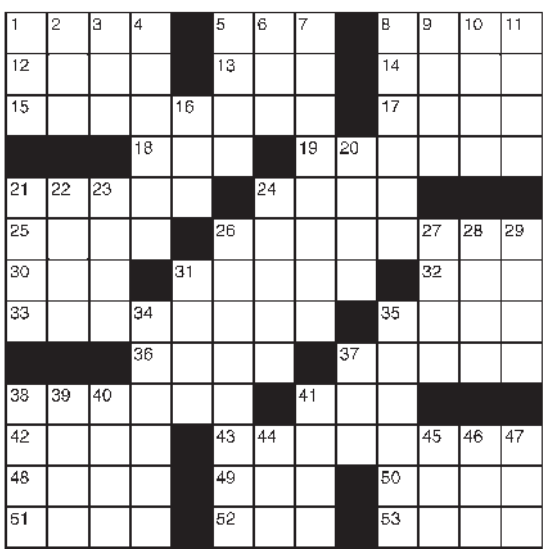
ACROSS
1 Omelet needs
5 Furry foot
8 Faucets
12 Lacking slack
13 German pronoun
14 Mother of Zeus
15 Ballot variety
17 Deserve
18 Museum display
19 Synagogue leaders
21 Fate
24 Father (Fr.)
25 Skin care brand
26 Chinese brew
30 Price point?
31 Smiles broadly
32 Business mag
33 Twice-baked Italian cookies
35 "Little Women" sister
36 Roll call reply
37 Handbag
38 Nikon product
41 Singer McGraw
42 Reed instrument
43 California national park
48 Toucan feature
49 Epoch
50 Actor Estrada
51 Diner orders
52 Aachen article
53 "Phooey!"

DOWN
1 JFK info
2 Talk on and on
3 Gloomy guy
4 Hot and humid
5 "Troy" actor Brad
6 High card
7 "This place doesn't look familiar"
8 "Jeopardy!" emcee
9 Melville captain
10 Gilpin of "Frasier"
11 Without
16 Gun lobby org.
20 Curved lines
21 "Today" anchor Hoda
22 Jai —
23 Cleaning cloths
24 Dish
26 Double-crossed
27 Level
28 Tolkien creatures
29 Dull pain
31 Afrikaner
34 Places to apply blush
35 With "out," depressed
37 Chart format
38 Baseball's Ty
39 Genesis shepherd
40 Castle defense
41 Russian ruler
44 Miner's find
45 Lyricist Gershwin
46 Badge metal
47 Heart chart (Abbr.)

Solution time: 22 mins.

H	A	M	■	W	A	S	■	C	■	C	B	S
I	S	E	■	A	L	I	E	N	■	A	R	K
S	U	G	A	R	L	A	N	D	■	N	A	Y
■	■	■	D	R	L	■	S	I	R	E	N	S
R	A	Z	Z	E	D	■	E	V	A	S	■	■
A	B	C	■	D	E	W	■	E	R	U	P	T
M	I	R	O	■	D	O	■	■	E	G	O	S
S	T	O	P	K	■	N	O	D	■	A	L	P
■	■	S	E	A	S	■	P	E	A	R	L	S
A	L	U	M	N	A	■	S	C	■	■	■	■
B	E	G	■	S	L	G	A	R	L	O	A	F
U	N	A	■	A	L	■	I	E	■	O	X	O
I	A	H	■	S	I	O	L	E	■	H	E	X

Yesterday's answer 5-5



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Adele, 32; Henry Cavill, 36; Danielle Fishel, 39; Tina Yothers, 47.

Happy Birthday: How you pitch in and help will make a difference that will influence your reputation and ability to advance. Reach out and do whatever it takes to support and encourage those who share your beliefs and values. Don't let uncertainty stand between you and being a part of the solution. You'll gain acclaim for your actions. Personal gain is within reach. Your numbers are 7, 16, 22, 27, 31, 35, 43.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Speak openly, share your feelings and be demonstrative about what you want to do. Good intentions, coupled with high energy, discipline and devotion, will help you achieve what you set out to do. Romance is on the rise. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Observation will help you make a better decision. Don't trust someone to contribute while under pressure. Look for alternatives, and consider doing your own thing. An option that will help you change your direction is favored. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Work hard, play hard and be proud of what you achieve. Personal gain is within reach if you step up and take over. Offer suggestions, but don't take on someone's responsibilities. A makeover or updating your image will lift your spirits. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Try something new or unfamiliar. The experience you gain will help you make changes that will improve your life. Don't let your emotions stand between you and what you deserve. Being forward-thinking will be required. Physical activity will lead to better health. ✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* The opposition you face or the changes others are making will leave you questioning whether you are doing the right thing. Take a moment to consider the consequences and how your decisions will affect others. Personal gain is apparent. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Learn from experience. Information is power, and talking to an expert will point you in the right direction. Branch out, and you'll discover you have more to offer than you realize. Take physical action, and do the best job possible. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Making recommendations and physically taking over and doing the work yourself are not the same. How much you accomplish and the rewards and results you receive will be directly linked to what's tangible. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* You'll face issues you should have addressed in the past. Don't linger over something that is standing in the way of your progress. Make the necessary changes, and keep moving forward. Anger and revenge are wastes of time. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Adventure, excitement and participation will encourage new beginnings. Don't let anyone interfere in your personal life or stop you from doing things you enjoy. You are in charge of your happiness, so follow your heart, and proceed with confidence. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* The changes you make at home should be well-thought-out and executed personally. Don't leave sensitive matters in someone else's hands. Don't let emotions infiltrate your professional action. Stick to the script, and finish what you start. ✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Use your skills to put your ideas in motion. A change at home will be good for the soul and encourage you to plan for the future. Turn a talent you have into a lucrative sideline. Romance is encouraged. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Make an effort to use your skills uniquely. Keep up with the times, and adjust to whatever is trending. A responsible attitude, coupled with a desire to make your life better, will bring about positive change. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are stubborn, proactive and reliable. You are competitive and commanding.

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	5	8				9	2	
			5	7	4			
6								4
		7				2		
8			4	3	9			6
		4				3		
5								3
			1	9	2			
	1	6				8	7	

Difficulty Level ★★ 5/05

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

7	3	9	8	2	1	5	4	6
4	5	1	7	6	9	8	2	3
2	6	8	3	4	5	9	1	7
9	4	5	2	7	6	1	3	8
8	1	7	5	9	3	2	6	4
6	2	3	1	8	4	7	5	9
3	9	2	4	5	8	6	7	1
1	7	6	9	3	2	4	8	5
5	8	4	6	1	7	3	9	2

Difficulty Level ★

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

PERSONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE **Solution: 8 letters**

Q	P	O	H	D	N	E	F	E	D	I	V	O	R	P
U	L	A	M	O	U	N	T	E	S	E	I	Ⓣ	N	B
O	E	R	U	T	U	F	U	P	X	C	Ⓢ	O	A	E
T	A	S	S	E	T	S	O	P	T	Ⓞ	I	S	D	C
E	M	O	C	N	I	R	E	M	Ⓒ	T	E	L	V	I
L	S	T	N	E	T	N	O	C	A	T	V	L	I	V
B	M	S	T	S	S	N	R	T	R	F	E	I	C	R
I	R	E	N	E	E	E	N	L	T	E	N	B	E	E
S	E	E	E	Y	Y	E	A	I	N	H	T	K	G	S
N	T	Y	G	W	S	C	C	M	O	T	O	A	A	A
O	R	O	A	E	I	L	T	I	C	R	M	M	R	H
P	A	L	R	D	A	S	I	T	B	A	I	A	E	C
S	V	P	E	I	E	W	O	R	D	I	N	G	V	R
E	E	M	M	U	R	E	N	T	E	R	E	E	O	U
R	L	E	G	A	L	I	F	E	E	S	S	S	C	P

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Action, Advice, Agent, Ages, Amount, Assets, Base, Bills, Broker, Claim, Contents, Contract, Cost, Coverage, Damage, Defend, Employees, Event, Expense, Fees, Future, Guest, Home, House, Income, Lawyer, Legal, Life, Limit, Medical, Money, Provide, Purchase, Quote, Renter, Representation, Responsible, Service, Sports, Sued, Terms, Theft, Travel, Wording

Yesterday's Answer: Downtown

To purchase **THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volumes 40, 42, and 44 through 58** order online at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

Kobe credits Jordan's help for 5 NBA titles

CHICAGO—Would Kobe Bryant have won five championships without help from Michael Jordan? Bryant himself claims he probably wouldn't have in a posthumous interview that brought about many emotions during episode five of "The Last Dance."

Viewers were treated to one last interview with Bryant, as he discussed his relationship with Michael Jordan, and how their relationship began at the 1998 All-Star game in Madison Square Garden.

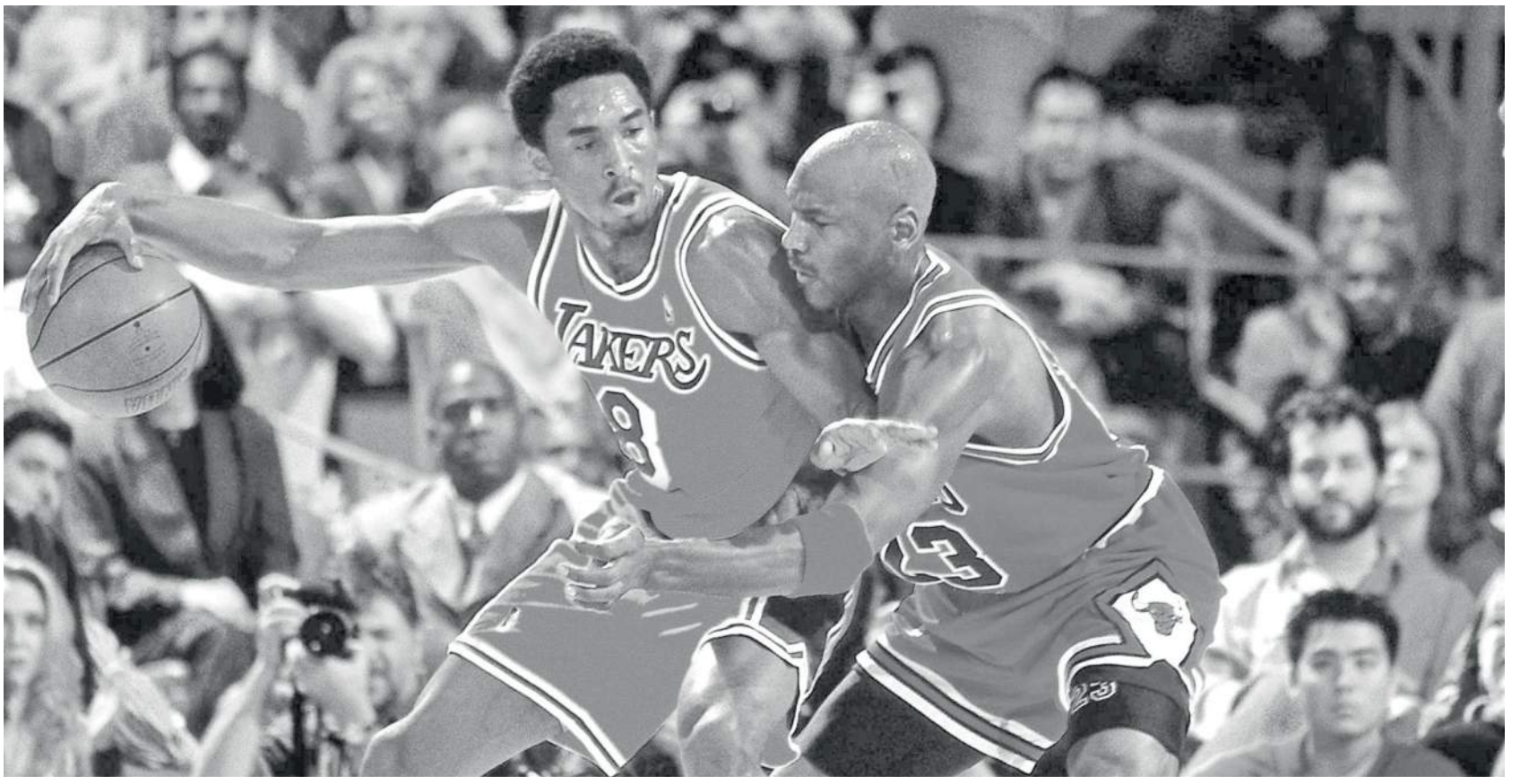
Fans who tuned into Bryant's memorial service at the end of February heard Jordan speak about how he saw Bryant as a little brother. Anyone who watched Bryant play could easily see that he modeled his game after MJ, although he often shied away from comparisons to Jordan.

But in that poignant interview, Bryant shared insight to the other side of that relationship as he recalled the advice Jordan gave to him during that All-Star game.

"Michael provided a lot of guidance for me," Bryant said. "I don't get five championships here without him. He guided me so much and gave me so much great advice."

But it wasn't just the typical "work hard and keep your head down" stuff you typically hear.

"I had a question about shooting his turnaround shot," Bryant said. "So I asked him about it. He gave me this great detailed answer. But on top of that, he said if you ever need anything, give me a call. That's my big brother."



AP

In this Feb. 1, 1998 file photo, Chicago Bulls' Michael Jordan (23) defends against Los Angeles Lakers' Kobe Bryant (8) during the second quarter of an NBA game in Inglewood, California. Lakers routed the Bulls, 112-87.

$130M shoe deal

Everybody knows Jordan has the most popular basketball shoes in the world.

Jordan's kicks are a status symbol, and are always among the best selling shoes.

But based value of shoe deals from May 2018 to May 2019 published by Forbes last year, we have an idea of just how popular Jordan's shoes are.

That's right. Jordan, who hasn't played in the NBA since 2003, is lapping his modern-day competition with a deal valued at $130 million per year.

Warriors superstar Steph Curry, who is the face of Under Armour, made $20 million during that calendar year.

LeBron James, who has a lifetime contract with Nike, isn't even close to Jordan. Yes, $32 million is nothing to sneeze at, but it's a fraction of Jordan's deal.

It's not surprising that Jordan's shoes still sell so well. After all, he is the GOAT. But the fact that the value of his shoe deal is so high is kind of stunning.

If LeBron can't even come close, no one ever will.

Price of fame

There were obvious perks to being teammates with Michael Jordan. Plenty of his Chicago teammates own multiple championship rings, they appear in some of the most-replayed NBA highlight clips of all time and they've got a lifetime of stories to tell about one of the best to ever take the court.

B.J. Armstrong also learned to move quickly—off the court, that is.

Whether it was during his rookie season when his stall in the Bulls locker room was adjacent to Jordan's locker, or at a dinner with the six-time NBA champion and Kobe Bryant about a quarter-century later, Armstrong often found himself with a front-row seat to witness the true cost of fame for arguably the world's most recognizable athlete.

"I remember as a young player I had this dream of playing in the NBA," Armstrong, the longtime NBA guard and three-time NBA champion with the Bulls who is now a California-based sports agent, told The Associated Press. "And I vividly remember when I got to Chicago thinking, 'You better be careful what you wish for, because you just might get it.' Michael was the first person to show me what it meant to be a star ... but you cannot be that star and not accept all the things that came with it."

The strain of Jordan's practically unprecedented level of stardom was one of the dominant themes in the latest installments of the ESPN and Netflix documentary "The Last Dance," a 10-part series that showed episodes five and six on Sunday night.

Every story about Jordan always seemed to become a big story, and Jordan felt some things were overblown such as his infamous stances on not wanting to endorse political candidates publicly or going with his father to Atlantic City for a quick gambling trip during the 1993 Eastern Conference finals.

"We understood his pressures, he understood what we needed and that was just a special group of people who got together," said Armstrong, who was a Jordan teammate for the 1991, 1992 and 1993 championships. "I don't wish stardom on anyone. When I hear people say, 'this guy's a star,' I always say, 'good luck.' What it takes to be a star at that level is beyond. Always having security around, dealing with tickets, he always had to be turned on. There's no preparation for that." ***(NBC)***

Nets GM does not rule out Durant return

NEW JERSEY—The NBA season remains shut down, and no one seems to know for sure when it's coming back. One thing that is clear, though, is that NBA commissioner Adam Silver isn't rushing the process.

That delay could make things very interesting for the Brooklyn Nets and their injured superstar Kevin Durant, who remains out with a ruptured Achilles' tendon suffered in the NBA Finals last season. It was previously expected that Durant would miss his first season with the Nets while recovering from the rupture.

Nets general manager Sean Marks didn't rule out the idea of Durant returning this season instead if postseason is postponed, in an interview with Newshub of his native New Zealand:

"That's a $110M question," chuckles Marks. "In all seriousness, we've tried not to talk about his timeline a lot.

"He knows his body better than anybody. Our performance team and training staff have done a tremendous job getting him to this point, but I just don't know how coming out of this pandemic will affect anybody, let alone Kevin. When you've got enough invested in a player like Kevin, we're never going to push him to come back. When the timing is right, he'll be 100 percent when he gets on the court."

"I can tell you this though—before the pandemic, he looked like Kevin Durant and that's a good thing," Marks added.

So basically, Durant's return is up to how Durant's body recovers. The big thing, though, is that Marks didn't say it wasn't happening.

Marks has been similarly vague in the past, saying this when Durant was cleared of the coronavirus after testing positive:

"I couldn't give an answer on when they'll play this season," Marks said, via ESPN. "I don't think it's fair to those athletes nor the performance team to put a timeline on it. I think everyone is dealing with bigger, far more pressing things."

Durant—and Kyrie Irving, also thought to be out for the season following shoulder surgery—returning fully healthy would have the potential to introduce another contender into the Eastern Conference. The Nets were on track for the seventh seed in the East with a record of 30-34, but few expected them to advance past the first round without Durant or Irving.

Seeing Durant back on the floor one postseason earlier than expected would be a surreal sight, but the sports world has been nothing but surreal since that fateful night in Oklahoma City.

Better trade offer for Giannis

If Giannis Antetokounmpo truly wants to "chase greatness" as he said last week, what better organization to join than the five-time reigning Western Conference-champion Warriors.

If the Milwaukee Bucks once again come up short of a championship, Antetokounmpo might not be too keen on signing a five-year, "supermax" extension to remain in Milwaukee.

Golden State is in position to make a pretty difficult trade offer for the Bucks to turn down should Antetokounmpo refuse their highest bid, according to Bleacher Report's Preston Ellis.

Milwaukee Bucks receive: Andrew Wiggins, GSW 2020 first-round pick, MIN 2021 first-round pick (top-three-protected), GSW 2022 first-round pick

Golden State Warriors receive: Giannis Antetokounmpo

Wiggins' contract likely wouldn't be an ideal match with Giannis, so general manager Bob Myers would need to do some more salary-cap maneuvering to make all the numbers line up.

But three first-round picks, especially when two are lottery selections, would be tough to beat for most franchises also looking to pry the former MVP from Milwaukee. Plus, while Wiggins hasn't quite lived up to the hype that typically surrounds a No. 1 overall pick, he's averaged just under 20 points a game over six NBA seasons.

What better way for a franchise to start over than with three first-round talents and a versatile swingman who's yet to see his 26th birthday?

To this point, the "Greek Freak" has given no indication that he intends to take his talents elsewhere. But if he does, this might be one of the better offers the Bucks will get for the All-Star. ***(NBC)***

Trout, Cole top 65 to earn $100K per game

NEW YORK (AP) —Mike Trout and Gerrit Cole aren't the only major leaguers with a big financial incentive to get back on the field.

While they head a starry quartet that would take in more than $200,000 per game, 65 players would earn at least $100,000 each time their team wins or loses if the pandemic-delayed major league season get under way, according to an analysis of their contracts by The Associated Press.

Most rookies and those making the minimum would get nearly $3,500 each. Every game added to the big league schedule earns players about $24 million in aggregate.

Clubs would benefit, too, with huge revenue streams flowing from regional sports networks and national broadcast contracts. A contentious negotiation is likely if Major League Baseball asks the players' association to accept salary cuts to compensate for competing in empty ballparks.

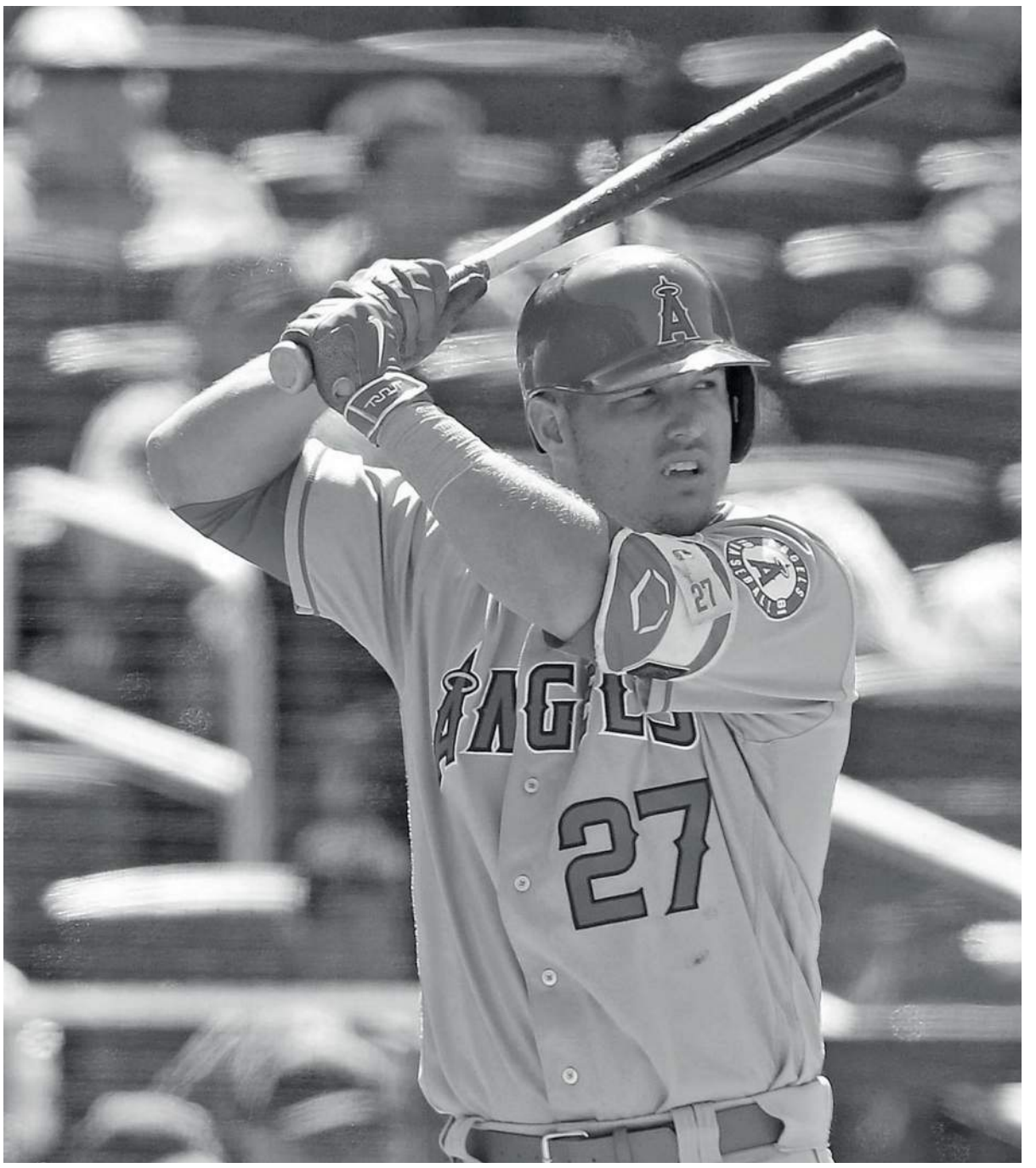
"I would need to be fully informed about revenue and things like that before I would decide if I think it's fair for us to do that," Washington first baseman Ryan Zimmerman said. "I know the owners make a lot of money. ... We're in such a unique situation. People want to play. People want to get back on the field."

"If there ever was a time where two sides that have obviously argued in the past could get along and get things done, now would be the time," he added. "That being said, I'm not going to sit here and say the players would be willing to do that. I don't even know if I would be willing to do that."

Zimmerman, 35 and closer to the end of his career than the beginning, has a $2 million salary and would get $12,346 per game.

Trout, the 28-year-old Los Angeles Angels star who has won three AL MVP awards, has a $36 million salary. He is tied for the major league high with Cole, the 29-year-old right-hander who left Houston as a free agent to sign with the New York Yankees. That works out to $222,222 for each game of the 162-game season.

Colorado third baseman Nolan Arenado is third at $216,049 per game, followed by Houston right-hander Justin Verlander at $203,704.



AP

In this June 21, 2018 file photo, Mike Trout of the Los Angeles Angels bats during a game against the Toronto Blue Jays in Anaheim, California.

Next is left-hander David Price, acquired by the Los Angeles Dodgers from Boston in February, at $197,531.

Lower down the salary scale, 392 of the approximately 900 players on active rosters and injured lists earn at least $10,000 a game, including 300 at $20,000 or more, 259 at $25,000 or more, 161 at $50,000 or higher and 100 at $75,000 or above.

Opening day was scheduled for March 26, but has been delayed indefinitely due to the new coronavirus pandemic. Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred is confident the 2020 season will start at some point, and MLB and the union have discussed possibilities that include playing in empty ballparks and neutral sites.

As part of a March deal between MLB and the union, players gained a key objective in bargaining: If no games are played, each player would get the same amount of service time this year as he earned in 2019. As part of the deal, teams are advancing $170 million in salary but players give up claims to any more if the season is scrapped. That leaves each player to earn a maximum $260,000, $60,000, $30,000 or $16,500, depending on his contract, if there is a missed season.

Players agreed to prorate their salaries based on actual games played.

Signing bonuses are guaranteed, so the amount of money a player stands to earn this year is calculated by taking his 2020 salary, dividing by 162 (the original total of games scheduled) and multiplying by total of games remaining as of the revised opening day. If the season is later interrupted due to the contagion, the numerator becomes the total of games of a player's team.

Union leaders and some players contend that agreement covers terms of any reduced season, fans or not, and management points to a provision that it is only for games at regular ballparks with fans. The agreement calls for "good-faith" talks over neutral sites and games without fans, and Manfred says 40% of revenue comes from tickets and gate-related revenue such as parking and concessions.

"Amongst Pirates players, I haven't heard a single thing that suggests they aren't really motivated to play," Pittsburgh general manager Ben Cherington said. "When you have groups that are that motivated to find solutions, it probably heightens my optimism, because when groups are that motivated, you tend to find solutions."

Twenty-eight players were at the $563,500 minimum when rosters were frozen on March 28, which comes to $3,478 a game. There were 369 at $600,000 or less, which is $3,704 a game.

The Los Angeles Dodgers have five players at $100,000 or more, the most in the majors. Just five teams have no players at $100,000: Arizona, Miami, Milwaukee, Pittsburgh and Tampa Bay.

Dodgers pitcher Ross Stripling reached one of the most fortuitous deals of the winter. Eligible for arbitration for the first time, he agreed to a $2.1 million contract with an unusual twist for a one-year deal: $1.5 million was put into a signing bonus. Just $600,000 is at risk as salary

A stockbroker in his spare time, Stripling has a better understanding of economics than most.

"It was kind of a unique way to bridge a gap, if you will, that we had. We were happy with the deal when we did it," said his agent, Matt Laird of Excel. "We didn't have any idea. Shoot, who did at that point in time?"

Olympians look to help young athletes during shutdown

CHICAGO (AP)—When Jesse Smith looks out at his Zoom audience, he knows exactly what the crowd is going through.

The captain of the U.S. men's water polo team is adjusting his training, too. He also misses playing alongside his friends.

One way Smith is dealing with the coronavirus pandemic is through virtual speaking engagements with water polo clubs and teams all over the country, passing along what he has learned during a couple decades in the water.

The 37-year-old Smith is one of several Olympic athletes who have been using digital avenues to help their sport during the shutdown. While Zoom sessions are a frequent choice, some athletes are offering training tips on Instagram and Olympic federations are pitching in with newsletters and other web-based help.

"We're all as athletes affected the same way," Smith said. "Even though I'm a four-time Olympian, a silver medal (winner), training for my fifth Olympics, the captain of my team, the same thing is going on in my head as a 16-year-old that got their (season) canceled, and I think that I have more tools available, so I'm trying to share that."

Beach volleyball star Kerri Walsh Jennings has been doing online talks with young volleyball players, including one with the team at her alma mater of Archbishop Mitty High School in California. U.S. wrestlers Mallory Velte, Pat Smith and Yianni Diakomihalis detailed their at-home workouts in a post on the federation website. Casey Patterson and April Ross were among a group of beach volleyball players who shared workout tips during Facebook live sessions on the AVP page.

The federations also are reaching out. USA Water Polo has been sending out a weekly newsletter called "At Home with USA Water Polo" featuring interviews with coaches and athletes. U.S. Rowing has been holding webinars for its members. USA Volleyball has a page on its website with COVID-19-related resources.

"A lot of people look to (us) in the athlete world, in our communities, for us to kind of be a voice. Like, how are we going to respond? What actions are we taking?" said U.S. softball pitcher Monica Abbott, who has been doing speaking engagements with young softball players and holding pitching-inspired workout sessions.

The effort by Olympic athletes and federations comes amid concern about the future of college sports. Some Olympic sports could be on the chopping block for athletic departments looking to save money after losing revenue due to the COVID-19 shutdown.

"I wouldn't say that that's something I'm focusing on, but it's definitely something that's in my mind and helps me plan for these," U.S. water polo center Matt Farmer said, "because I'm taking an optimistic view of what's going to happen in college water polo, because it means so much to so many people."

Farmer, a 24-year-old Chicago native who played on three NCAA championship teams at UCLA, is focusing his outreach efforts on the Midwest. California is the home of American water polo, but Farmer is hoping he can help some young players follow in his footsteps.

"I kind of blazed a trail from Chicago to international water polo," Farmer said, "and I want to share my experiences with people and maybe give advice to people who are thinking about playing in college or continuing the sport and just want to grow as players and as people."

Stidham faces tall order as Pats starting QB

NEW ENGLAND (AP)—Quarterback Jarrett Stidham was tossed directly into the lion's den of New England sports in March when Tom Brady left the Patriots and signed with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Formerly the backup QB behind Brady, he suddenly became the team's starter, tasked with filling the shoes of a Patriots legend (and one of the greatest quarterbacks of all time). That's a tall order, and Stidham could easily let the pressure get to him.

One of Stidham's college coaches doesn't think that will happen, though. Gus Malzahn, who coached Stidham at Auburn in 2017 and 2018 before Stidham declared for the 2019 draft, told ESPN that he's confident the young QB is set up to succeed and ready for whatever he'll face.

"It definitely helped him to learn under the best and see what that looks like, but he's the kind of young man, too, this is what he's been waiting on. I'll tell you, the moment won't be too big for him. He'll be up to the challenge, that's what I expect," Malzahn told ESPN.com.

"Even when he got here, before he played his first game, you could just kind of tell he was a mature young man. Like a gym rat, always at the complex trying to learn, study film. When he got drafted by the Patriots [in 2019], I thought it was a perfect spot for him system-wise—spreading the field. He's so good with protections, changing protections, and scheme-wise everything that goes with it, and just the flexibility the scheme gives him. I think that really applies to his strength."

It goes beyond how he prepares, though. Malzahn also believes that Stidham's personality and ability to connect with people will help him navigate his new situation and help him find success.

"He's a people person, too. He has the ability, right off the bat, to develop relationships. People rally around him," Malzahn told ESPN. "When he first got here, he had spent one-on-one with the coaches, one-on-one time with the players. He just has that ability that people want to follow him."

Stidham has already made a worthwhile connection with team captain Devin McCourty, who said on his podcast in March that Stidham impressed him last season and even helped the first string play better.

"To me, the best thing for Stiddy was that he had to go against our defense every week. He didn't have it easy," McCourty said Sunday night on his "Double Coverage" podcast with twin brother and teammate, Jason McCourty. "I love his poise. I would be faking a blitz sometimes and we'd make eye contact and he'd just start smiling and laughing."

"To me, there were weeks where he was just on-point. And those were some of our best weeks as a defense, mainly because Stiddy ate us up in practice leading up to the game, and I think put more pressure on us. So I really admire just how hard he works, and then I've got to know him off the field as well. He's a really good guy. Young guy, but very mature. He's married. I think the Stidhams are going to be in New England for a long time," Devin McCourty added.

Stidham has his work cut out for him in New England this season. It looks like he's already got a strong foundation for success, but will that translate into actual wins? We'll have to wait and see.

AP

In this Dec. 29, 2019 file photo, New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady, left, leaves the game, while Jarrett Stidham warm up for their NFL match against the Miami Dolphins, in Foxborough, Mass.

Patterson to Chiefs

The former No. 1 prep quarterback in the nation is signing with the Super Bowl champions.

Former Michigan quarterback Shea Patterson has agreed to a deal with the Kansas City Chiefs.

The 23-year-old Patterson, who was the consensus top prep quarterback in the nation in 2016, went undrafted last month after starting 13 games in each of the last two years for the Wolverines.

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with the online drills, it focuses more on individual growth. I definitely like the online drills because I enjoy working and improving my ball handling skills. My favorite drill to do at home is when I use a tennis ball while dribbling. It works on your hand eye coordination, too," the Mt. Carmel School student said.

"Although playing on the court is definitely different, considering the circumstances, the online drills are great. The drills have definitely given me something to look forward to especially with this pandemic. It's great that even with these conditions, it hasn't stop the Rollers' program from helping us," Bucalig added.

Kaia Travilla is another Rollers women's team member joining the program and loves how challenging the drills are and how they will help them get better and ready when actual games and practices resume.

"They are very challenging, especially the behind the back dribbling drills. But, I am glad that the coaches still find a way to give us the opportunity to continue improving our skills despite the situation we are into," Travilla said.

Besides getting used to looking at videos of drills instead of following in-person training workouts, Alipio said another hurdle to the program is the internet connection.

"We may have technical difficulties at times, but we have to be patient and continue with the workout," the Rollers coach said.

Meanwhile, Diaz lauded the club's female players and coaches for showing progress and commitment to the program.

"Everyone is working hard to make sure they get the drills right," Diaz said.

PODZIEWSKI

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a great coaching staff in coach Mita (Michiteru Mita), coach Jersh (Angeles), and the Chelsea coaches that have professional licenses and have experience coaching all over the world, so I would like to thank them," said Podziewski, who is still in Boston and has been taking part in the Teen Ayuyus' virtual training workouts.

Though he adjusted well in his rookie season with the Rams, Podziewski's first year in the collegiate ranks was not without hiccups.

"It was an interesting learning experience. I was a starter from the very first game, which is something I was proud of coming in as a new player but being able to prove myself to the coaching staff. Our team struggled with some changes in the coaching staff, and dealing with those issues were also difficult. It's a relatively short season (from August to November), but we have two games in one week for most weeks and that was an adjustment I had to make, mentally and physically preparing for games, especially with all of my commitments as a student," said Podziewski, the MHS Class of 2019 valedictorian.

"It was my first experience with longer trips for away games, some teams we played were a two to three-hour drive away from our campus in Boston, so staying mentally switched on during the drives was also a new experience. Injuries here and there took me out of the starting lineup, but I was able to make an impact every time I stepped on to the field. I was happy that I was able to connect to my teammates who I've obviously never met or played with before (outside of Sunjoon Tenorio) and being able to be a vocal presence on my team," he added.

SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY

Suffolk University's Dai Podziewski makes a defensive stop during their game against Lesley College.

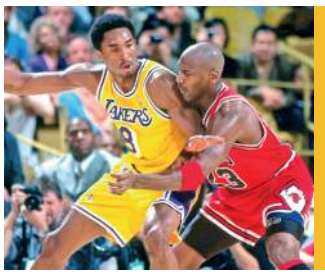
SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY

Suffolk University's Dai Podziewski is greeted by their coaches during the introduction of the Rams' starting 11 in their game versus Lesley College.

Podziewski appeared in 11 of the Rams' 16 games and was a starter in seven matches. He assisted the winning goal in Suffolk's home opener over Lesley College and also fed a teammate in their 6-2 victory versus Anna Maria College.

He will be back for the Rams to play his sophomore season and vows to work harder to help their team as they move to a more competitive division.

"I will be returning to Suffolk next season, and I have a lot of goals; personal and team. We are moving to the Commonwealth Coast Conference next season, which will be more competitive than the GNAC. My goal is to win the conference and make a deep playoff run. My personal goal is to start all games and lead the conference in least goals conceded," Podziewski said.



Kobe credits Jordan's help for 5 NBA titles

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Trout, Cole top 65 to earn $100K per game

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Podziewski battle-tested

SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY

Suffolk University's Dai Podziewski, left, kicks the ball, while a Lesley College player steps in late for defense during their game in the Great Northeast Athletic Conference of the National Collegiate Athletics Association in Boston last year.

SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY

Suffolk University's Dai Podziewski , third left, and his teammates exchange hi-fives with Lesley College players after their game.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

CNMI National Team member Dai Podziewski may be a newcomer in collegiate soccer, but his experience with the Blue Ayuyus helped him play like a veteran in his rookie season in the National Collegiate Athletics Association.

Podziewski plays for Suffolk University in Boston in the Great Northeast Athletic Conference and started out for the Rams in his debut game.

"It was against Massachusetts Maritime Academy and an away game. It was actually on my birthday (Aug. 31). It was a back-and-forth game that ended up in a 1-1 draw after the full 90 minutes and overtime, and I started and played the full game. Massachusetts Maritime is a team that heavily relied on strong physical play style," Podziewski said.

The Suffolk University defender held his own against the tough Massachusetts Maritime Academy players and credited his stint with the CNMI National Team for preparing him to withstand whatever their opponents throw at him.

"Being a member of the NMI MNT had a big impact for my adjustments to NCAA soccer, because my experiences back home with the national team gave me confidence to play against talented teams. I wasn't fazed against the teams I played against because I knew I've had top-level coaching and experiences playing against some of the best competition in high-stakes settings," the Marianas High School graduate said.

"This helped me build a professional mindset and approach to games which made my transition pretty simple. Not enough people truly appreciate the fact that we have

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Rollers female players keep up

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Rollers Basketball Club's female players are showing the same commitment as their male counterparts in participating in the group's virtual training workouts.

Led by coaches Chevy Kate Alipio and Jenny Lee, the Rollers women's team has been receiving regular instructional videos from their mentors and head coach Joe Diaz and are diligently working on them to master the drills. Similar programs have been shared with Rollers' boys U12, U15, and U18 squads.

"The online training is a way to build up individual skills during this time of the coronavirus pandemic. During the online training we are mostly focusing with basic ball handling skills. It is good to get used to a certain skill and develop from there as we progress to different ball handling drills," said Alipio.

Team member Fiona Bucalig echoed Alipio's thoughts and admitted that though the setup is different compared to the on-court practices, she enjoys the opportunity to focus on improving her individual skills.

"On the court we work on chemistry and teamwork, but

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

A video grab from Rollers Basketball Club's online training workout shows players Fiona Bucalig, top, Kaia Travilla, bottom, and coach Chevy Kate Alipio, inset, sharing feedback on the drills they performed.